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THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE YOLANDA

THE YOLANDA RANCH HOUSE, 1970

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THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE YOLANDA

With an introduction by
Eyvind M. Faye

Interviews conducted by
Shipley Walters

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INTRODUCTION

George Hecke was a friend. A short, heavyset man, dynamic, with an uncanny ability to pick people to do a job. He had a big influence on my life. I came to Yolo County as a recent graduate in Agriculture from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1927. Among the crops I grew, one fruit was prunes, also one of Dr. Hecke's at Yolanda.

I met Dr. Hecke soon after my arrival. He was a man of great energy. In 1931 he had retired as Director of Agriculture, a post he held for about twenty-five years under four governors, but he never gave up his interests and active participation in agricultural affairs.

When Dr. Hecke first went to Sacramento to direct the affairs of the department, he found it to consist of many independent services, inspection controls, and departments working largely independently of each other. He knew that in order to have a strong department all phases must be brought together under a responsible director. There was, of course, resistance to this effort. Politics came into play, and to mitigate this influence, Governor William Stephens allowed him to appoint a committee of his own choosing to work for the best interest of agriculture as a whole.

Among the great men chosen at that time, who also had a profound effect on the development of the California Department of Agriculture, was James Mills of Hamilton City, a man of wide talents, an orchardist in Glenn County who grew citrus, pears and prunes.

The prune industry was in distress in those days of the 1929-1940 depression. We had lost much our European market when England went off the Gold Standard in 1933 and Hitler took over Germany, a country that alone took nearly one half of the California production of prunes.

Dr. Hecke invited me one early morning to Yolanda. There he introduced me to Mr. Mills. They said they would be pleased to have me join in a meeting in San Francisco to consider the problems of the prune industry and what might be done to solve them. I was hooked! The California Prune Pool was formed, and with the California Prune and Apricot Growers Association (now Sunsweet Growers, Inc.), the organization called the United Prune Growers of California was created. This was a first attempt of the prune industry to work together: Association members, independent packers and growers.

Many, many more organizations followed and dissolved into others over the years since, until now we operate under two marketing orders: the Prune Administrative Committee, a Federal order formed in 1948, and the California Prune Board, a State order formed in 1952. But it was Dr. Hecke's force of character that successfully made that first step. He was always there with advice and counsel, with a push if necessary.

The basic purposes today are the same as he helped lay down in 1933:

1. To regulate the movement of prunes into trade channels.

2. To stabilize prune values in the trade.

3. To establish standard grades for buying and selling prunes.

4. To stimulate consumer demand.

Doesn't that sound like Dr. Hecke? He was a man with vision and a drive to get it done. This ability was manifest in so many ways: His interest and contribution to the State Fair and the many county fairs in the state; his ability to see so clearly the problem and inherent danger to all California of the foot and mouth disease epidemic in 1924; and his drive to organize its eradication in less than 30 months.

Dr. Hecke was interested in helping farmers develop strength in the market place through cooperative marketing organizations. These organizations needed a voice in the Legislature, so under his guidance an Agricultural Legislative Committee was formed in 1923. One of his assistants, Ralph Taylor, became the Executive Secretary. Later this organization became the Agricultural Council of California. I was priviledged to be its president in 1969-1970. It is now the legislative watchdog for over 70 of the strongest cooperative marketing organizations in California.

Dr. Hecke came to California as a young man in 1892, and in the 61 years he lived here, his one driving objective was to improve agriculture. That he did.

Eyvind M. Faye, President
Faye Properties
Knights Landing, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY

At a dinner party in Davis in the spring of 1979, a group of my friends were talking about oral history and how important it is to write down old family stories while the older family members are still living and telling stories. Mary Major suggested that Leila and Charles Hardy had a particularly good story to tell, and that someone should record their story, not only for the family but for the University as well.

A short time later, I related our dinner conversation to A.I. Dickman of the UCD Oral History Program. The idea of recording the memoirs of the Hardy family interested him tremendously, especially since very little had been published about the life of Leila Hardy's father, George H. Hecke, who was the first Director of the California State Department of Agriculture.

During the summer of 1979, Mr. Dickman and I talked to Leila and Charles Hardy about the undertaking. They enthusiastically agreed to cooperate and immediately loaned me several family scrapbooks to read for background information.

I spent much of the summer reading about the family, about Dr. Hecke and the Department of Agriculture, about the office of the County Agricultural Commissioner and farming in Yolo County.

In the fall of 1979, I met four times with Leila Hardy and once with Charles Hardy in the living room of their beautiful home on the Yolanda Ranch. Later I interviewed Herb Chandler, the Yolo County Agricultural Commissioner, in his office in Woodland, Charlotte Hardy Johnson, the Hardy's older daughter, in her home in Sacramento, W.C. Jacobsen, a former Director of the Department of Agriculture, and William O. Goold, Chief, Bureau of Exhibits, California Exposition. Each of these meetings lasted about two hours and was tape-recorded.

During the early months of 1980, I transcribed the tapes at home, and I finished the topical editing in August. The manuscript was read, chapter by chapter, by members of the Hardy family. Mr. Jacobsen gave special attention to the account of Dr. Hecke and the organization of the California Department of Agriculture. I greatly appreciate the thoroughness with which these people read the manuscript and the care with which they offered their corrections and suggestions.

At the Hardy's request, Mr. Eyvind M. Faye, president of Faye Properties, Knights Landing, was invited to write an introduction. His generous and timely contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

The final copy was typed by Josephine Chu. My thanks to her for her excellent work.

A special word of thanks is in order for Mr. A.I. Dickman, Head of the Oral History Center. His technical assistance and faith in me have been of invaluable help in the production of this oral history.

Shipley Walters
Interviewer-Editor

I. THE RANCH

The Yolanda Ranch is located in the center of Yolo County, California, about 2 miles south of Woodland on a quiet country road. A long line of olive and tall palm trees leads to the ranch, which is situated on the northwest corner of county roads 99 and 25A. The main ranchhouse, which is clearly visible from the road, is a two-story Westlake style house with green trim and a red tile roof. In the last 100 years this ranch has produced not only countless tons of the fruits and vegetables for which Yolo County is famous, but also some of the men and women who have contributed the most to California agriculture.

Our story of the Yolanda Ranch begins in 1880 when Byron Jackson and his brother Frank purchased 160 acres of land from John Reynolds. The brothers planted grape vines, prune, apricot and olive trees, and alfalfa. For the next 20 years, fresh and dried fruit were shipped from the ranch in boxes with the colorful label "Byron Jackson Vineyard and Orchards." Over the years since 1900 the ranch has produced sugar beets, tomatoes, grain, and a variety of row crops as well as beef and dairy cattle, pigs and chickens. The ranch today is owned and operated, as it has been for the past 35 years, by Charles and Leila Hardy.

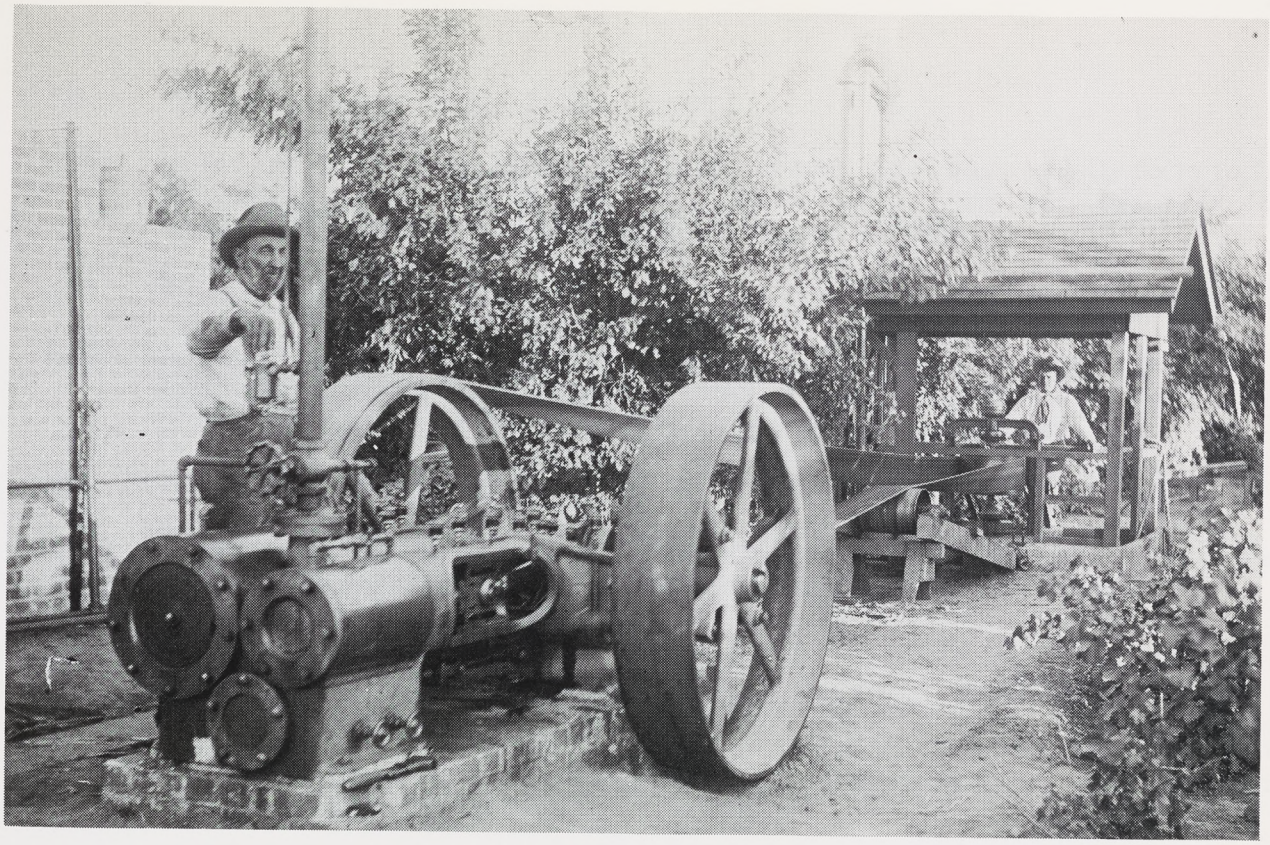
Our first narrator is Leila Hardy, daughter of George H. Hecke, who bought the Yolanda Ranch from Byron Jackson in 1909.

LHH: My name is Leila Hecke Hardy, and I've lived all my life on the Yolanda Ranch here in Yolo County.

Byron Jackson Buys the Ranch

SW: I understand that Byron Jackson bought the ranch around 1880. What did he want to do with it?

LHH: Mr. Jackson was an inventor. He had a foundry in San Francisco, on Market Street, and his pride and joy was an agricultural (centrifugal) pump. In order to try it out, he decided that the best thing to do was to buy a ranch. Being a man of means, he sought the best place he could find. So he came to Yolo county and bought 160 acres from a man by the name of Mr. Reynolds in 1880. He planted it to apricots, prunes, grapes and a few olive trees.



Byron Jackson experimented with his new pump on the Yolanda. This picture, taken in 1892, shows the pump in action and the newly hired farm hand, George Hecke, "learning the ropes."

In 1902 there were 1,200 apricot trees, 4,466 prune trees and 54,367 grape vines on the Yolanda. Here, workers are picking grapes and prunes.

SW: How many people did Mr. Jackson employ?

LHH: In the fall of the year, during the harvest season, there were usually forty to fifty men and perhaps twenty to thirty in the labor camp. There were twenty to forty women who packed fruit according to the size of the crop.

SW: What kind of grapes did he raise?

LHH: Muscat, Sultana and Thompson seedless. There were twenty-five acres of apricots, fifteen acres of Thompson seedless grapes, ten of olives and ninety of prunes. The remaining acres were used for dry yard and buildings.

SW: He also had some milk cows?

LHH: In order for this farm to be self-supporting, he had a dairy, 100 chickens, sheep and hogs for slaughtering for the meat, some beef, and a vegetable garden.

SW: Did he market any of the milk?

LHH: Yes, he marketed the cream only. We had a big cellar out in the back where we kept the milk, and every morning the cream was skimmed off by hand with a little scoop. I can see my mother doing it now, putting it into cans and taking it in a horsedrawn buggy to the Woodland Creamery.

SW: Where did the water for irrigation come from before Mr. Jackson installed his pumping plant?

LHH: The water came from Cache Creek. In those days they flooded the orchards by checks. The water came in a big ditch from Moore's Dam.

But the ditches weren't very satisfactory, since by summer there wasn't enough water.

SW: So then Mr. Jackson wanted to increase the reliability of his water supply? Tell me about the pumps.

LHH: On the north side of the ranch was the best place he could find to get water. All our testing since then has proved this. He put in his pump there, the Byron Jackson Centrifugal Pump, and it was there for years. We still have the same well, certainly much deeper than it was. We've had to replace several pumps, but we used his for a long, long time and it was very successful.

SW: The water table now is much lower than it was then?

LHH: Much lower.

The Ranch Buildings

SW: After Byron Jackson bought the ranch, then he started building the house?

LHH: Yes. First he built the little milk house in the back. The walls of that are about two feet thick. It's cool there all summer long. And in back of that, he had a bedroom, a room for eating and a bath. He stayed there whenever he came up to

the ranch until the main house was completed (in 1884). On the other side of the house was an office that my dad used as long as he lived.

SW: Let's talk about the main ranch house.

LHH: Mr. Jackson decided to make a summer home of it for his family. In those days there was no way of getting help unless you boarded them. So he built a fifteen-room house with a large dining room for the men and a large dining room for the women, and a big kitchen. Also, the family had their own private kitchen and dining room. The ranch cooks cooked for them all. There was a big dormitory upstairs where the ladies stayed. The women were there from the first of July until the end of November, packing the apricots, prunes and the raisins for retail sale in San Francisco because there weren't any houses for packing like they have now. On Saturday night they went in town on a bus or a wagon to their families, and then they came back on Sunday night. Most of the men came from the labor camp, the Japanese and Chinese labor camps. But besides that, at the height of the season we would hire sixty men whom we fed. We got those men from Sacramento.

SW: And after Mr. Jackson built the main house, he built the prune dryer?

LHH: Yes. It was very large, about a 300-foot building made of wood. In those days, wood didn't cost what it does now. It had an all-wooden floor. On the east end inside that building was a small well that supplied the gardens and the house. There was a windmill on top. That was the way we got our water. The east end was used for cutting apricots by the ladies.

About three-quarters of the building was made into twenty tunnels, ten on each side. Here, when the weather was inclement the prunes were dried.

SW: Mr. Jackson sold the ranch to the bank first in about 1903. Why did he do that?

LHH: I think he must have had a reversal. Then he had a good year and he bought it back.

George Hecke Buys the Ranch

SW: And then he sold the ranch to your father in 1909. At that time your father was the ranch manager. Did he borrow money to buy the ranch?

LHH: He must have. He never actually told me what they did. There was a ranch over at Mullen's Station, on the highway. Dad called that ranch the Victoria. We were going to go there and live. Dad was buying that. I remember I would go over with mother when she painted some of the rooms. I remember the room which she said was to be my room, so that was very important to me.

The big earthquake was in 1906, and Mr. Jackson must have been pretty hard up for money because he had a lot of damage to his foundry down on Market Street in San Francisco. He wanted to sell the ranch, and Dad got up a brochure with pictures. Dad and Mother felt that they could raise the money some way and they would use the Victoria as collateral.

Mr. Jackson always underrated Dad's ability, but he said, "All right. If you want to buy the ranch, I'll sell it to you." Then he put in the contract with them

that if Dad had missed one single payment on the ranch, the whole ranch would have gone back to Mr. Jackson. Dad and Mother decided that wasn't going to happen.

Every fall when the crops came in, Dad paid Mr. Jackson and the banks what he owed. Farmers always borrowed money. Whenever Dad did, we were told, "You can't have this. You can't have that. We've got to wait until we pay off the bank." And we were always delighted when the fall of the year came and the bank was paid.

The Naming of Yolanda

Dad always had an inkling to name everything that he owned. When he and Mother bought the ranch from Mr. Jackson in 1909, they wanted to name the ranch. They decided to combine Yolo County and Woodland. And so they called it Yolanda. Now, we were told that "Yolande" is an Indian name meaning "welcome." Anyway, we like to think that.

At one time Dad bought a ranch just south of us, forty acres, and he named it "the Copia." And then in 1903 he bought a ranch at Madison, and he and Mother went over there at Easter time and looked it over. The California poppies were blooming all around it. So he called it "Copa de Oro."

SW: When your Dad bought the ranch, do you know if he made any major changes in the operation of ranch?

LHH: He pretty much continued it as it was. They lived pretty close to the vest for some years, and then finally Dad sold the Victoria ranch.

Processing the Fruit

SW: The main business of the Yolanda Ranch was the growing and processing of fruit -- prunes, apricots and grapes particularly. Would you tell me about the processing of the fruit?

LHH: After the fruit was picked, it was brought to the dryer for processing. The prunes were dipped outside in boiling water with soda in it. The prunes went down over a needleboard, a board that was full of hundreds and hundreds of sharp steel points which pricked the skin, allowing the prunes to dry better. As the dipper shook back and forth, up and down,the prunes were bounced about over the needleboard. From there they were placed on trays to dry.

SW: Were they on a belt?

LHH: No. They were just on a slant. The grader shook right down over this grid. The small prunes fell out first, the medium ones next, and then the large ones. They went on 3 x 9 trays which were stacked on little cars and taken on little tracks to the dry yard outside. There they were dried.

When the weather was inclement, then the drying had to be done on the inside. That was very particular work. You had to have a man who really knew his business because in about twelve hours, if you didn't watch them, they would burn, just the way they would in your stove at home.

SW: What dried them inside?

LHH: We had two big furnaces at either end. There they burned all the bundled prunings from the prunes, grapes and apricots. Then they always got a carload of pine blocks from the Diamond Match Company in Woodland, good size and small, irregular, with knotholes in them, which were just thrown away and not used the way they do now. And we burned those. They kept a very hot fire going. And there were two large fans at either end. The hot air went down one side for twelve hours and then was reversed and it went down the other side for twelve hours. It would take about twenty-four hours to dry a carload of prunes.

SW: Did you use the same process for the apricots?

LHH: No, we never had to dry apricots inside. We processed them the last of June and early July, and the apricots were always dried out in the dry yard. It was always a ticklish proposition. If it rained, you always had to be very careful to get them stacked. Dad knew the man who had the Weather Bureau reports in Sacramento. He would phone Dad whenever a storm was coming, and Dad would phone five or six farmers around here who had also fruit. They all got their men out and stacked their fruit that afternoon, or morning or night. Once in a while, the rain came out at nighttime and surprised us. Many a night Dad got out the funny old cars with acetylene lights on them and shone them out on the yard. And they took all the lanterns out there (when they were stacking the fruit). They hustled the men out of bed. Boy, they didn't want to get up, but they did. If they didn't get up, they were marched up to the house given their checks and sent down the road.

SW: What time of year was it when you dried the prunes?

LHH: September. And it could extend into October.

SW: When you covered the prunes, what did you cover them with?

LHH: The trays of prunes were stacked up until they were about twelve trays high, and then an empty tray was put on top of the others.

SW: And that would keep them dry?

LHH: Yes. As soon as the storm was over. They only lasted ten to twelve hours in the summer, then the trays were put out again.

SW: When the prunes were dry, then what happened?

Marketing the Prunes

LHH: Then they went into this large packing house that was another large building just beyond the dryer. It was also a huge wooden building, with all-wooden floors. The prunes were taken in there and dumped in bins. Before they were sold, they were graded by size.

This always interested me. If you sold your prunes for $100 a ton, if they ran seventy-five to a pound, you got $100. If they ran seventy-six to a pound, you got ninety-nine. But if they ran seventy-four to a pound, then you would get another one dollar a ton for them. I remember those shipping days when Dad was

in the Department (State Department of Agriculture), he'd plan to be over here the morning that the buyer came. The buyer (Mr. Roberts) and Dad would go out to the packing house. The prunes were put into 100-pound sacks. Every sack or two the buyer would take out a handful and Dad would take out a handful and put them into a lug box. Dad and Mr. Roberts would go over to the scale, a little brass tray that they would put out there. They would each put in a pound of prunes and count them, five at a time. And they recorded the number of prunes per pound. Each would watch the other fellow pretty carefully, because $100 a ton those days meant a lot of money. You only got 4½ cents a pound for prunes in those days. After they had enough to fill up the wagon, the teamsters would go over to Mullen's Station and load them in a boxcar which was all ready to be loaded on a siding.

SW: Now who was Mr. Roberts?

LHH: He was the representative for either Guggenheim or Rosenburg. Those were the two big firms that usually bought all of our fruit. Instead of buying it like they do now (after our crops are all harvested), in those days, just when the last frost was over, the buyer would come out and look your crop over to see how big a crop you had, how your trees looked and everything. Then they'd offer you a price, so much a ton if they ran so much a pound.

SW: Where did these prunes go?

LHH: In the early days most of the prunes were shipped to Germany. They were packed in small one-to-five pound boxes by the girls. As things got a little bit better and we didn't need the girls anymore, the prunes were shipped directly to San Francisco, where in the warehouses the better grades were sorted out and packed and shipped to retailers. Germany was the best buyer, as I said, for the smaller grades of prunes.

SW: Were these the boxes that had the Byron Jackson label on them?

LHH: Right. The ones that we packed here.

SW: Did you keep the Byron Jackson label after your father bought the ranch?

LHH: Maybe for a year or two.

SW: When your father had the fruits, did he have a label of his own?

LHH: No. He just shipped in bulk to San Francisco, and they went out under their labels.

SW: Was the same kind of marketing process used with the apricots?

Raisins

LLH: Similar. And with the raisins. I remember there was a box with a picture of a very cute little cupid with a great big bunch of raisins practically all covering the figure. The Sultanas and the Thompson Seedless were sold mostly in bulk. The others were bought more for fancy raisins.

It was interesting that the Sultana grapes were picked and they didn't have to be graded. They were dipped in very hot water with a little soda in it, and then they went out on 3 x 6 trays to dry. Then they went to the stemmer.

Mr. Russell Blowers, on the ranch where the Yolo County Fairground now is, developed a raisin called the Oil-Bleached Thompson Seedless. They took prizes all over the United States where they were exhibited. They were dipped in very hot water with olive oil in it. They came out a beautiful amber color and were much more flavorful.

SW: Why do you dip the raisins?

LHH: You have to clean them in the almost boiling water. The soda cuts the bloom and takes off the dust from both the raisins and the prunes.

SW: Did you prick the raisins?

LHH: No. Only the prunes because they were so large.

Very often in the dry yard, if the weather cooled, they would place an empty tray on top of a tray of grapes and turn it over. That way the grapes were turned in order to keep them drying as evenly as possible.

SW: When they picked the fruit, did they pick by hand, or did they knock the trees and gather the fruit from underneath?

LHH: In those days they didn't use knockers at all. They waited until the prunes matured and dropped and they picked them off the ground. That's when the women and children helped in the picking. The grapes were picked by hand, mostly by the men from our labor camps.

SW: When was your grape harvest?

LHH: The grape harvest came before the prunes generally. Sometimes, unfortunately, they overlapped. But as a rule they finished the grapes before the prunes. Apricots were over by the middle of July, and then there was a little spell in there when there was nothing. Then the grapes began to come in, and then the prunes. It would be almost the first of November before you could say the crops were all in.

Winter Activities

SW: When the last of the fruit was picked and dried, then what activities went on at the ranch, say in December and January?

LHH: That was a time when you did lots and lots of pruning. This was all orchard land with no open fields at all except the dry yard. Then there was the clean-up work.

In those days people around here had small dairy barns with three or four cows and a few horses to take care of. And Dad's teamsters would haul the manure all winter long. They gave it to us just for cleaning it out of their barns. It was spread all over the land, and we never had to use fertilizer.

In the spring of the year, he planted mustard and legumes in the soil. That was called a "green cover" crop, and the little nodules on the roots of the plants supplied the nitrogen. It was plowed under in April and it incorporated in the soil.

Olives

SW: Tell me about your olives. Has that been one of your crops always?

LHH: Yes. Of course, they are more for aesthetic value now than for anything else. For many years they paid very well, but now the oil olives come in from the Mediterranean, the pickled olives in oil come in from Spain, and it's cheaper really to import them. It doesn't pay for us to raise them now.

SW: When olives were a paying crop, did you grow them for the oil?

LHH: These were mostly the Mission olives which is an oil olive. They were harvested in the winter. Dad was very careful about having something for his men to do in winter months. So, when the olives were ready in January, February or March, the men picked the olives.

They were sent in town, to the Woodland Olive Co. now, but another man in town bought them for a while. Santoni's (V. Santoni & Co. in Woodland) bought them for years. They had their own small crusher. The olives were picked here and taken in town and crushed and made into olive oil and then distributed.

We had a few trees that are used for pickling. Those are Manzanilla olives. They are picked by hand. The others are knocked. They were picked by hand most of the time, but then it got so expensive they just waited and picked them up when they fell on the ground. Or they knocked them on sheets and picked them up. It didn't matter if they were bruised or not. It didn't make any difference with the oil olives. But the ones that were used for eating had to be picked by hand. They made also the dried olives (Greek olives), the kind that was cured in rock salt until all the oil came out of it and then the olive was eaten that way. The Southern Europeans are very fond of dried olives.

SW: You didn't process olives at Yolanda?

LHH: No. It was all done at the processing plant in town.

SW: Your men picked the olives and put them in containers. What kind of containers?

LHH: Fifty-pound lug boxes. That kept the men busy all through those winter months. Of course, it was a nasty job. Picking all those olives in that fog was a horrible job, but that kept them busy. In the days it rained, they didn't work, and the days it was too foggy or too cold, they didn't work.

SW: It seems to me you had a very good year-round use of your men.

The Laborers

LHH: Yes, we did. Dad always kept ten to twelve laborers here year-round. We kept these men for years. This was home to them. There were sixteen of those faithful, good laborers buried out there in the cemetery. And I go every Memorial Day and put something on their graves because I can remember how faithful and good they were.

SW: Did they have families?

LHH: No, none of them were married. They just stayed here the year around.

They were always here during Christmas. Dad always had the men come in on Christmas Eve. Mother always made punch and candy and always Dad had us all sing "Holy Night" and one or two of the carols. Of course, nobody could carry a tune, but anyway, everybody sang. And then my sister and I gave them as much candy and punch as we could and then they'd go. Dad always had a special check for them, and my sister and I always bought them shaving cream and toothpaste. I'll bet they never shaved or brushed their teeth in their lives, but we always did give them that as a present from us for Christmas. And they always gave us presents too.

SW: How many men came?

LHH: About ten or twelve. Some went into Sacramento, but the rest stayed here.

SW: These men lived in a bunkhouse on the ranch?

LHH: Yes. The ones who stayed with us all the time lived above the garage. Dad built a bunkhouse above the garage with living quarters for about ten or twelve of the men up there. They had a bathroom, a toilet and sink upstairs. The old bunkhouse didn't have those things.

The Yolanda Bell

SW: Tell me about the famous bell.

LHH: Well, that was Mr. Jackson's bell. The men came in when the old Chinaman rang that bell. It rang first in the morning at six o'clock. When everybody in the neighborhood heard that bell, they knew it was six o'clock. The men got up and came up to the house. They washed their hands and face up here. There was a big sink out there with roller towels. Mother was so particular about them. She changed the towels once every day. There were three big long ones, I guess, six-foot towels. She soaked them in lye, and then she would scald them before she put them up again. She didn't think it was sanitary any other way, and it probably wasn't.

Then the men had breakfast at 6:15. Seven o'clock the bell rang again, and they went out to work. The bell rang at 12:00 to quit work, 12:15 to eat, 1:00 to go to work, 6:00 to quit work, 6:15 to eat. And, as I said, the neighbors around here all set their clocks by that bell.

If the bell ever rang out of time, then they knew there was something unusual on the ranch. Always when there was a fire here, or the neighbors had fires, we rang that bell. And the old bell's up there still.

SW: Does it ever ring now?

LHH: Only in a hard north wind.

Ranch Management

SW: Let's talk about the management of the ranch. Your father bought the ranch in 1909 and managed it until he went off to Sacramento as Director of the Department of Agriculture in 1916. Did you manage the ranch yourself for a couple of years after you graduated from high school in 1918?

LHH: No. I managed the apricot shed from about 1914 always until we got rid of the apricots in the 1940's. Of course, for the first few years it was just during the harvest season. After I was out of college in 1922, I managed the ranch for about two years. Then I went south and taught agriculture for a year and a half. Then I married Charles and we moved back to the ranch, and we've lived here ever since.

SW: When you married, you returned to Yolanda and your husband managed the ranch?

LHH: Yes, we were married in 1928. Then, you know, the Big Crash came in '29. After Dad resigned from the State Department of Agriculture in 1931, he took a job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and he also took a job in San Francisco. It was hard to make money in those days. So when Charles was offered the job as Agricultural Commissioner and Sealer of Weights and Measures in Yolo County, he took that. Then Charles was in Woodland six days a week, but he helped me in the mornings and in the evenings. And, of course, Dad was living here at that time, so of course, he was really the big boss.

SW: So actually three of you together managed the ranch?

LHH: Yes.

Some Ranch Problems

SW: Do you recall whether there were any special problems that the first world war brought about as far as the ranch was concerned?

LHH: I was so young then. I was in high school. But I do remember that when we had a big wind or a big fall of prunes and we were in a hurry to get them picked up, Mr. Hyman, the principal of Woodland High School, was kind enough to excuse any student who wanted to go out and harvest fruit for a day or two. They were not discredited in their classwork whatever.

Water

And during World War I, we had a bad time with water. They were trying to let all the water go to the farms where they raised wheat and vegetable crops. I remember that our ranch had always had abundant water so the roots of the trees were not down so very far. They were pretty close to the surface. Dad had a great deal of difficulty getting water enough. We lost about thirty to forty acres of prunes because of drought.

SW: Did you deep irrigate those trees?

LHH: In those days we didn't irrigate by rows or by sprinklers to conserve water like we do now. We irrigated by checks. The land was all surveyed so the water would

flow down from one side to the other, from north to south or east to west, whichever way the land sloped. And then the water went into each one of these big checks until it was clear up to the top. The levees around the side of the plots were about two feet high. They had to be taken out when we cultivated. When the checks were full of water, then the irrigator would cut through the levees and the water would flow into the next one. That way the prunes got a good soaking of two feet of water before the water was let out to the next check.

SW: Are these checks similar to the ones they use for rice?

LHH: Yes.

SW: How long would the water stay on a given check?

LHH: It was quite some time. The water would flow through maybe eight or ten checks before it ran out. It would make it through may be three or four checks a day. They always irrigated day and night when they got the water from Clear Lake Water Company. You had to take it when it came. You kept it as long as you needed it, and then you returned it to the main ditch so the next farmer got it.

SW: How often would you have water?

LHH: You had to put your name in for the water. If you said, "I want water on the fifteenth of May, "then you took water on the fifteenth of May. You estimated how many days you wanted the water. Then your neighbor knew to have his land ready by the twentieth or whenever you got through with the water.

SW: But you'd only have the water once?

LHH: No. We'd have it three, four, or five times a season, as much as you applied for. And to supplement between times, we had our big pump, the one Mr. Jackson was using here on the ranch. That helped too. But it didn't put out the volume for a check. A pump works very well for our land now because we do it by a sprinkling system or by rows. In those days you had to have a pretty good head of water to fill up the checks.

SW: When you got the water in turn, did you pay for it by the acre foot?

LHH: Yes, we paid the Clear Lake Water Company.

Frost

SW: You were saying that one of the other major problems, besides water, is frost.

LHH: Yes, and the curing of the fruit. Two big problems.

SW: Did you use smudge pots?

LHH: No, not in the early days. We never smudged our apricots. The smudge pots had not become efficient, and we felt that we'd just take the loss when it came. The prunes didn't suffer very much. You knew that after the first of May there would be no more frost. You could plant or do anything you wanted then without fear of frost.

SW: What were some of the other problems you had with your fruit trees?

Pests

LHH: We had to deal with certain kinds of fungus, red spiders and mites, brown rot and things like that.

SW: Did you deal with those by spraying?

LHH: Yes. We went through the ranch with a spray rig, an old Bean sprayer, put out by a man named Mr. Bean. It was one of the early sprayers that came on the market. One man drove the machinery. There was a big wooden tank on the back of this wagon, mounted permanently when you bought your sprayer. There were two nozzles coming from the tank, and a pump. One man sprayed on one side and another man on the other side of the row. At first it was horse-drawn. Later tractors were used.

SW: What was the spray?

LHH: With apricots, we sprayed with Blue Stone. For the prunes, for the red spider, we had an oil spray. I can't remember what it was.

SW: You didn't have too much trouble with animals, like rats or birds, in your trees, did you?

LHH: No. We didn't have anything like that. In the early days of the ranch they had road runners, porcupines, foxes and squirrels, even deer, but they never were any trouble.

Labor

SW: Did you have any trouble getting laborers during the first world war?

LHH: Yes, we had trouble with labor. That's where our labor camps helped us a great deal. There were a lot of hoboes in those days that came along the road. We could get those.

And then there was that famous Wide Awake Employment Office on Second Street in Sacramento that always had people that were drunkards and weren't able to go to war or do a lot of other things. But they could do the manual labor. We always called Mr. Ralph, the manager, whom we knew very well. We'd say, "We need cooks in the kitchen" or "We need help on the ranch picking fruit" or whatever we were doing, or we'd say "We need five, six, seven or eight men." "All right. They'll be out on the train." The Northern Electric train ran from Woodland to Sacramento across the tules. In the evening, if there were less than four or five men, I used to go to town and get them. I wouldn't any more do that in this day and age than anything. I'd go there and I would watch the people who got off the train. I knew the ones that looked like laborers, and I asked them if they were going out to Mr. Hecke's. And they said, "Yes."

We piled them into the back of the car. We had seven-passenger cars in those days. And I'd take them back to the ranch. They'd probably get there in time for dinner in the evening, and the next morning they'd go to work.

Fire

SW: With all your wooden buildings, were fires a problem?

LHH: Yes, we had some serious fires.

SW: After a fire, did you have to go to the bank and borrow money to rebuild?

LHH: Yes, we did that. We always had ample insurance here because it was too hard to refinance unless you did. And there was always danger. We had a liquor problem with the men. The men we had, as I said, were off of Two Street in Sacramento. While they were good laborers -- with anything I said I don't want anybody to think we were looking down at any of these men. We needed every one of them. Some were good and some were not so good, but they were our source of labor and we were grateful for as good ones as we had. And we certainly had those faithful ones. But in the fall of the year when we had to have so many men, many of those were the skid row men from Sacramento who came out. Very often we had some excellent, excellent cooks in the kitchen. They worked in the good restaurants in Sacramento, and they'd get to the point where they had just been drinking so much that they'd come out and, as they said, "dry out." They'd come here and work a month or six weeks, and then we'd get another one.

Marketing

SW: Going back to the time of the first world war, did the war affect your marketing at all?

LHH: There were some things you couldn't get, and there was more demand for other things. We couldn't get flour, and we couldn't get sugar. We had the milk and the eggs and the cream and the meat here. During World War II it was harder to get meat than during the first one.

SW: Before World War I you were selling a lot of your prunes to Germany. Did the war affect that market?

LHH: I guess it must have. I don't remember. But I do remember Dad saying, "Your mother and I put you through college selling four and a half cents prunes." (laughter) The trees were very fruitful. We took good care of them. We had big crops unless we had frost. While the price was low for each prune, we had a lot of them.

The Hardys Take Over the Ranch

SW: And you continued the prunes, grapes and apricots as your money crops?

LHH: Yes, all through the first world war, the twenties, the thirties, and the forties. In 1945 when Dad deeded the ranch to Charles and me, the first thing we did which was a drastic change was to take out the apricots. They bore well, but we were a little off too far from the main apricot area. You see, Winters had all the apricots over there, and they shipped their fruit to San Francisco and from there to San Jose where they had the big canneries. There was only one cannery in Sacramento, and they didn't buy too many fresh apricots. Then we had to cut the apricots and dry them, and that got to be such a problem -- getting cutters out

here to do it, watching out for the shed, and so on. So we took out our apricots, all but about five acres or so, right along the ditch, just for our own use.

SW: You used to have about twenty acres of apricots?

LHH: Yes, twenty-five acres.

SW: When you cut down the apricot trees, did you put anything in their place?

LHH: No, we leveled that acreage for a few years in order to get the land back in condition again. From then on we raised a lot of alfalfa, sugar beets, then row crops. There was a good market for alfalfa, particularly over on the coast for the dairies over there.

SW: That was in the forties? Did you continue raising your grapes?

LHH: Yes. We raised grapes always until there was the Volstead Act and nobody was drinking wine. Prohibition came in and we had an awful time getting rid of our grapes. So we would ship them to a nice small winery over in Napa County. The buyer was an older man who was very particular about his grapes. We would pick the grapes during the day and stack them out in the yard here. And he would come at three o'clock in the morning. He'd honk his horn as he came in, and then we'd all get out there and get all the men up. They'd dump the grapes into his big gondola (truck) and he would take them away. He wanted to take those grapes over there in the cool of the day and crush them before noon. He made very good wine because he was very particular how he did it. So we sold to him. After he died, we just took out the vines.

SW: You weren't making raisins then either?

LHH: No. Our dryer had burned.

SW: Do you remember about when it was that you stopped growing the grapes?

LHH: I imagine it was around 1956.

SW: What about the prunes?

LHH: We kept the prunes. These prune trees were pretty close to seventy-five years old; some a little older and some not quite so old. But they began to dwindle a little bit. The row crops were coming into the county about then: sugar beets, beans and tomatoes. We tried all of the row crops at different times here. Sugar beets were our best crops at that time. We had wheat, of course, alternating grain and tomatoes.

SW: By the 1950s, you really were no longer an orchardist?

LHH: About the fifties we began slowly to take out small acreages and put them into row crops.

SW: And has that continued into the seventies?

LHH: Yes. Our land is all open land now except for the border of the olive trees. Along the ditch bank we have a few apricots. We don't raise any sugar beets at all due to sugar beet nematode.

Nematode

SW: What is nematode?

LHH: A nematode is an eel worm that attacks the root of any crop like carrots, beets and things like that. Rotation gets rid of it in a few years.

SW: You just plow under your crop and let it die by itself?

LHH: Yes. And how it spreads! I don't know how it got into the county, but it did. When we took our sugar beets into the factory to get them weighed and cleaned, there was somebody in there that had nematodes on the tires of the truck. And we picked them up and brought them out here. Everybody had it. There are very few sugar beets grown in Yolo County now in comparison to what there used to be.

SW: And the methods used by the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, testing and what-not, didn't really help?

LHH: No. It was down in the ground. It was difficult to get rid of and it was expensive. And tomatoes paid lots better.

SW: Do you still have your 160 acres?

LHH: We still have 160 acres at Yolanda. I would guess that about ten acres are in buildings and open land.

SW: You said at one point that there was another ranch?

LHH: We have another ranch of 200 acres at Madison. There it's all open land and we raise tomatoes, sugar beets, safflower, corn, wheat and barley.

SW: Have you a manager for the ranch now?

LHH: No. We have a lessor here, and we have the ranch leased out at Madison. We really have most of this ranch leased out here too.

SW: But you still keep the books for the ranch?

LHH: Oh yes. I keep all the books on this ranch, but not for the man who leases the other ranch. He keeps his own books. We still have men here. We have to harvest our olives and the ranch has to be cleaned up. My husband is very particular about that. He goes out and takes care of all of that. We have a gardener and a caretaker and so forth.

The Changing Work Force

SW: Let's go back to 1945 when your father turned over the ranch to you and Charles. Did you stop the practice of ringing the big bell to call the men?

LHH: Oh, that was one of the first things that Mr. Hardy and I really did about three years after we had the ranch. We didn't want to do it too soon because we didn't want to hurt Dad's feelings. That was the way he had done it and the way he wanted to do it. And he'd say, "If these young squirts take up these things, they'll go broke and have a terrible time." So we waited about three years, and then we

closed the ranch kitchen completely. Charles and I boarded about three or four of the men for a time. We fixed it so most of them could do their cooking for themselves. And then we had the labor camps. By that time the older ones, the ones who had stayed year in and year out, didn't come any more because the labor camps took care of all of them.

SW: The labor camps are for seasonal workers?

LHH: That's right.

SW: Do you have a labor camp on Yolanda?

LHH: We did have, but now there are contract labor camps. All the individual farmers have houses for the year-round workers. We have three houses that Mexican families live in. One family has been living here since 1941. Another family has been here seven years. Then, some of the workers are just transients, coming just to help for the season.

SW: Do they pay rent?

LHH: No. We supply the homes for them.

SW: For your work force now you have a few who actually live here, and when you need extra help, for the tomato harvest or whatever, do you get them from labor camps?

LHH: We get them from the labor contractor.

SW: Do you get them on a daily basis?

LHH: Yes. The trouble with that is that you have to bring them back and forth. So the farmers around here have buildings that they fix up for homes for the workers. And a lot of the Mexicans are getting so affluent now that they have their own homes in town. They drive their own pickups or the farmer's pickup back and forth to this ranch. The man who rents our land here pays us so much a year for the use of our buildings -- barns, sheds and three houses. Of course we get a percentage of the crop, as all farmers do.

SW: During your life, you've seen a really big change in farming, not only in the crops but also the kind of laborers and the way of dealing with them.

LHH: Oh yes. You asked me where I get the extra help. Seasonal labor comes in from Mexico. You know about March they'll come knocking on your back door and say, "Here we are. We want some money for food stamps." You give them some money. They go to town and get food stamps. Then they begin looking around for work. There's thinning of the sugar beets, the weeding of the tomatoes, weeding of other crops, and, oh, all sorts of things that the farmer needs done on the ranch. They come in and stay in these houses around here. And they're here until all the crops are harvested. The tomatoes, corn, sugar beets, and the beans, sunflower and seed crops are all harvested by machinery now, so they don't need so many men. With the tomatoes picked by machine, you only need about eight or ten laborers on a tomato harvester. You used to need twenty to thirty to hand pick your crop. So you don't have so much of a help problem any more. There are labor camps, but not too many of them. Every farmer had one at one time.

SW: Did you have difficulties getting laborers when you took over the ranch about the end of World War II?

LHH: No, because the Mexicans came in about that time. But we had to get Indians during the war itself. They were very poor help.

SW: Where did they come from?

LHH: Mr. Weston had the high school bus service in Woodland. He would take his buses down and get busloads of Indians from down in Arizona and New Mexico. They were never used to the liquor. They got the liquor around here, and it was the undoing of the Indians.

SW: They probably weren't trained for fruit work either, were they?

LHH: No, they weren't trained. The Chinese, of course, were the best of all help ever anybody had.

SW: You said you had Chinese workers a long time ago.

LHH: They were the first ones. That was when the ranch was established before 1900.

SW: When did you stop getting Chinese workers?

LHH: Remember, they put restrictions on the Chinese. They wouldn't let them come in. That must have been around 1903 or '4. We had a Chinese cook. Everybody could get Chinese cooks, and they always stayed pretty well.

Then the Japanese came in. They were good workers too, but they looked out for themselves more. I mean they wanted more privileges than the others. But they were pretty good for a long, long time. And then they began to want what the white man had. And they began to buy their own land.

Then we had a spell of Hindus. They came from India. They were not too satisfactory. I remember that The U.S. Customs wouldn't allow any of the women to come in. I remember this one man didn't appear for work, and our foreman said, "Where was this fellow Mr. Singh?" (They were all named Mr. Singh, and they all had these turbans around their heads.) "Oh. Him have baby last night. Him come back to work tomorrow."

Then we got the Mexicans, and they loved it here because they got good money here. They were good help. They were afraid to do anything that wasn't up to snuff. They'd get in trouble. We were not supposed to hire the wetbacks, but they didn't have the green cards like they do now, so there was no way of knowing. You just had to take their word.

SW: Did you speak Spanish?

LHH: Very little, but I got along with them.

II. GEORGE HENRY HECKE, THE MAN

George Henry Hecke was born in Germany on January 4, 1870. He came to Yolo County in 1892, when he was 22 years old, to work for Byron Jackson on his ranch. 17 years later, he owned that ranch. At age 27 he married Elizabeth Welch, the daughter of one of the county's pioneer settlers. The Heckes had three children, Leila, Martha and Harold, who died in infancy.

George Hecke lived and farmed at the Yolanda Ranch all his adult life, but his energy and abilities were too great for him to confine his activities to a single place. He became a citizen of the United States, and at various times in his long lifetime he worked for agencies of the federal, state and county government which promoted and regulated agriculture. He died at the age of 83 on January 13, 1953, on his beloved Yolanda Ranch.

George Hecke received many honors for his contributions to agriculture, but the one which pleased him the most was the honorary Doctor of Laws awarded him by the University of California on March 23, 1936. The statement on that diploma sums up the life of this remarkable man:

> The Regents of the University of California, in recognition of meritorious achievements, have conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws upon George Henry Hecke, farmer, stockman, horticulturalist, able organizer and first Director of California's excellent State Department of Agriculture. Alert, zealous guardian of the state's basic industry, protector of her crops and livestock against the ravages of foreign insects and diseases, loyal servant of your adopted people.

Here is Dr. Hecke's reply:

> I have worked for the welfare of farm business. For it I did, and do now, the very best I know how -- the best I can.
>
> I mean to keep on doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference.

This chapter gives a picture of George Hecke, the man, as he was viewed by members of his family and by two of his professional colleagues.

The first narrator is his daughter, Leila Hecke Hardy:

George Hecke was 55 years old and the Director of the Department of Agriculture when this picture was taken in 1925.

George Hecke always loved to go fast. Before he bought the second automobile in Yolo County, he had a carriage and fast horses, like this one pictured on the Yolanda in 1906.

Hecke's Early Life

LHH: Dad was born in 1870 in Hamburg, Germany. He was an only child. His father was a gentle, kind, very wonderful carver of wood. He carved the altar chairs in St. Michael's Cathedral in Hamburg. He made many beautiful pieces of furniture.

His mother was a dynamic, energetic, very powerful type of person, a large woman. He got a lot of his energy from her.

When he graduated from Geisenheim-on-the-Rhine, which was a viticultural college, he was of draft age. He didn't want to be in the military, so he ran away from home and went to Paris, where he graduated from the Sorbonne. There was a fine agricultural college there, and other colleges too.

SW: How did he support himself when he was in Paris?

LHH: He put himself through the Sorbonne on odd jobs. He had a bad time. I remember that if I left a crust of bread on my plate, he would say, "Eat that." And I'd say, "I don't want it, Daddy." "The day will come when you may wish you had eaten that. I can just see the day when I would have loved a piece of crust like that." So we never wasted anything in this house.

He always wanted to come to America. But he felt that he had to learn the language, and the best way to do it was to go to England. So he went to London, and there he put himself through Kew Gardens (Royal Botanical Gardens), which is a very, very famous agricultural school to this day.

One day when he was planting some plants in the garden, Queen Victoria came by and talked to him. He was very pleased with that.

He watched the papers, and he saw they were advertising for a man with horticultural experience to come to Bakersfield, California, and help plant orange orchards. So he decided to come. He came steerage to New York. How he got from New York, unless he rode the rails, I'll never know. He never did tell us.

Hecke Comes to California

He came to Bakersfield and helped to plan and plant the first orange orchard there. That was not what he wanted to do, so he kept watching the papers. Then he saw an advertisement where a man with horticultural experience was needed to manage a fruit ranch in Woodland in Yolo County. So he wrote to Byron Jackson (who had placed the advertisement) and he got the job. But Mr. Jackson, being a very wise man, didn't let him be the manager at first. He put him on the ranch to learn the tricks of the trade here. The first time he had to hitch up a horse, he had no more idea which end of the harness to put on the head and which on the tail. Everybody laughed at him. But he soon learned.

SW: Could he speak English fairly well by then?

LHH: Oh yes. By the time he got here, he spoke English fluently. All his life he read and spoke three languages constantly. He always read French books; he always read German books; he always read American books. He loved the three languages.

SW: So, your father came to Yolo County in 1892. He worked on the ranch for about a year or so, and then he was made manager?

LHH: Yes.

LHH: A few years later, Dad met Mother here on the ranch. During the apricot season, girls would come out from town to the ranch to cut fruit. They would come out with their own horse and buggy or horses for the day. They didn't stay here. My mother came along with the other young ladies of the community because she wanted to make some spending money. Dad met her here, and after two or three years of courtship, they were married (in 1897).

SW: It was while your father was manager of the ranch that you children were born. Is that right?

LHH: Yes. I was born in 1898, and my sister Martha was born in 1901. A son Harold was born in 1905, but he only lived about a year and a half.

Hecke Works for U.S. Department of Agriculture

SW: When did your father take his first public job?

LHH: He went to work for the United State Department of Agriculture (as an assistant in the viticultural division) in 1904. He worked under a man named Mr. Husmann in Washington, D.C. He really enjoyed that. That took him out all over the state on trips. He had a pretty good foreman on the ranch, and Mother looked out for what she could. Dad would go for maybe a week at a time, and then he'd come back and be here for maybe six weeks or a month or two. He had a pass on the Southern Pacific train so he could go and come when he needed to.

He had that job at the time of the San Francisco earthquake in 1906. He could go back and forth into San Francisco when others couldn't travel because he had a government pass.

SW: What did he do in that job?

LHH: I suppose he was the agricultural representative for the far west.*

SW: It was about this time that negotiations were taking place to locate the University Farm in Yolo County. Didn't your father want the location at Mullen's Station just south of Woodland?

LHH: No. Dad wanted the State to buy some land across from where the junior high school is now, on College Street in Woodland. It belonged to Mr. Gibson. It was a great big piece of property, maybe 400 acres, and Dad wanted to have a cow college there.

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*(SW note: He was hired as an expert in viticulture to be in charge of 11 experimental stations in California which were working to develop grape vines resistant to phylloxera, a disease which was ruining the vineyards.)

When he and Mr. George Pierce went back to Governor Pardee, the Governor said, "No." And he was a very smart man to have said so. He said it was too small a bill. He said, "When you bring me a bill that will include all of agriculture, I'll be glad to sign it."

SW: Was that Judge Peter Shields' bill?

LHH: No. He had nothing to do with this. He had something else at one time. He had something to connect him with the University because they named that street and the library for him. I can't remember what it was.

But G.W. Pierce and Dad went back in two years with a bill including all of agriculture in the college. It went to the Legislature and Governor Pardee signed it. The two men each wanted it in their own town: Dad in Woodland and Mr. Pierce in Davis. And fortunately Mr. Pierce won, for in those early days, there was not enough money to have full-time professors in all the departments (at Davis). So many of them would come up on that early morning train from Berkeley and get here in time to give 9 or 10 o'clock classes. Then they would leave on the late afternoon train and be home in time for dinner in the evening. They would have classes maybe once or twice a week for a whole semester. That way the University got good mileage out of the professors both ways.

SW: Then the college was located on Mr. Pierce's property?

LHH: Yes.

Demonstration Trains

LHH: Later, when the University of California established the demonstration trains going up and down the state, Dad and some of the professors from the University would be in the trains. They would advertise that they were coming, and the trains stopped in each town. That was before all these agricultural fairs. When the people came through the trains, they would teach and explain the exhibits to them. The trains had four or five cars, and they'd have little (miniature) exhibits -- little models of farms. Nothing was big or full-sized. They'd have different breeds of dairy cattle, and hogs and horses. And they would show different means of cultivating with different kinds of plows. They would show the different fruits and tell about the many varieties, what to do with them, and how to care for them.

SW: Was it a sort of traveling college?

LHH: That's right. Dad went on these demonstration trains for many years. He often took me with him. I was fascinated with the little models. That's why I remember them so well.

SW: Was there a connection between your father's work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and these trains?

LHH: No, I think they were completely separate. I think he had a connection with the University of California and Davis because mostly the professors were from Davis, and some of the professors were from Berkeley. They were lovely man. They were awfully nice to me, the little brat who came along on the train.

Hecke Works for Yolo County

SW: When did your father go to work for Yolo County?

LHH: In about 1912 or '13. He was the first Farm Advisor for Yolo County, and he only had that job for a year.

There's a little joke about when he was Farm Advisor at $1 a year. He served two or three weeks under a year, and they sent him a check for 98¢. We always laughed about that. Wish the government were as careful about spending its money today.

Then in about 1914 he was appointed Horticultural Commissioner in Yolo County. He served there for 3 years and in 1916 Governor Hiram Johnson appointed him Commissioner of Horticulture for California.

State Department of Agriculture

And it was Dad who established the first State Department of Agriculture. I guess he'd learned his lesson from Governor Pardee because he included everything, even mattress inspection. They had plant quarantine and veterinary science, milk inspection, food and fish inspection, weights and measures, and so many other services. He combined all those into the Department of Agriculture. He was appointed by Governor Stephens in 1919 as its first Director. It was such an excellent, outstanding department. It was an example of the best department in the United States and many of the other states copied it. They took some of Dad's best men to establish similar offices in Washington, D.C.

The department was managed so efficiently that when President Hoover was elected, he asked Dad to be his Secretary of Agriculture. But that would have meant that he would have had to be away from the ranch completely, and he felt that his life was really here. His family were here; his heart was here; so he did not accept the appointment. But it was a compliment to him.

SW: Did he live at Yolanda when he was the Director of the State Department of Agriculture?

LHH: Always. He commuted to Sacramento each day. For years he drove his own car, but then toward the end, the State furnished him a car.

Dad always got up at 6 o'clock in the morning, if not 5 o'clock. He was all shaved and dressed, and he'd go out and talk to the foreman and the boys when they had breakfast at 6 o'clock. My sister and I got up at the same time, and we always had breakfast at 6:15 when the men ate.

Dad left here at 7 o'clock every morning and drove to Sacramento. He was there all day and left there at 5 o'clock and got home at 6 o'clock in the evening. How he got through some of those fogs, I'll never know, for they didn't have the roads they do now. Of course, sometimes he was gone three or four days at a time, or often he would go for a week. He had the stamina and he didn't mind it.

Then in the evening, the foreman would come in after dinner. He and Dad would always play a game of cards and they would talk over all the next day's

work. The next morning he didn't have to talk to the foreman, but he'd go down and talk to all the men. If Mother didn't have breakfast ready on time in the family dining room, he'd go down and have breakfast with the men.

He was an unusual person. Mother deserves a lot of credit for putting up with a man that was gone so much. He always got up at the crack of dawn, even before he worked in Sacramento, just fired up all the time. She was right with him all along. She deserves a great deal of credit for that.

Hecke's Personal Characteristics

SW: What did your father look like?

LHH: He was a short man, heavy set. He was dynamic. You could almost feel the strength that came from him.

SW: Did he wear glasses?

LHH: During the last years he did, but not until then.

And he was firm! His flesh was solid. It wasn't until just before he died that he began to get a little flabby.

I remember coming home from college one night, and I said something to Dad, joking. And he said, "You've got to." And I said, "I won't do it." And he said, "You will." And he came and picked my sister under one arm and me under the other arm and just held us around our necks just like a strong vise. And he said, "Now I've got you." And we all laughed. He could handle the two of us.

He was strong. Swimming had a lot to do with that. He had dark brown hair and brown eyes. His eyes were very, very sparkley. You could tell his feelings from his eyes. They were very expressive. If you cooperated, he appreciated the good things you did. But he was never too lavish in his praise. He'd say, "That was fine. Now get going." That was his attitude.

SW: Did he speak rapidly?

LHH: Very. I couldn't keep up with him. And he walked fast. Oh boy, did he walk fast! I was the only person who could keep up with him. He was just a go-getter. He really was. You know, if he hadn't had the brains, the ability, and the really rightness back of everything he did, he could have been a hellcat. He really could have been. But he used every bit of his ability for agriculture. "To heck with the rest of them," he'd say. "They brought their man, they could do it. I'm for agriculture, first, last and always." That was it.

SW: You've always stressed his leadership qualities. Was he dictatorial?

LHH: Well, yes and no. He was very efficient and very competent and a good executive. But if he knew something was right and somebody came in and wanted to do any little thing shady, or didn't want to do it, he'd say, "This is the way we're going to do it." And they did!

You could say that in that way he was dictatorial. But not for himself, only for the cause. Always for the cause. The state of California and Agriculture were the two things that were next to God, and he stuck up for those, no matter what.

SW: Obviously his life shows a great deal of tenacity.

LHH: As Mrs. (Byron) Jackson used to say, "Hecke is a damn good man. The only person he'll ever mind is Hecke." But he pulled Mr. Jackson out of a hole at the time of the (San Francisco) Fire in 1906. It paid off. You had to know Dad. His bark was worse than his bite.

SW: He certainly accomplished many things.

LHH: Yes, he did, and without having any of the things people have now to help them along. He did it by studying hard, perseverence and work.

And Dad never had any bringing up in the social ways. Mother had to take all the rough places off she could for him. And she did a great, great deal. This is an example:

When we went up to Victoria, B.C. to the conference of the Western Plant Quarantine Board, we stayed at the beautiful Empress Hotel. The English are very particular, and the plates and the knives and forks and napkins and everything were set out just so. And Dad would come down to breakfast and join some of the other men and their wives or just the men. And they were sitting at the table and discussing, and Dad first thing would push the silverware out of the way and put his hands on the table like this (gesturing). The waiter would come and put them all back. That would happen three or four times at a meal. It worried my mother and it worried me too. Those kinds of things didn't bother him whatever.

He was particular about his clothes. He was always well-dressed, and he had all his clothes tailor-made. His shirts were even tailor-made when he could afford it. But the little niceties of things like that (table settings) didn't bother him.

Sunday Afternoon Staff Meetings

Then there was something that Mother always liked, and she also disliked. My sister and I dreaded it, for we had to take care of the children. On Sunday afternoons Dad had the head of each one of his departments over here at the house. I think some of the men in the office liked it and some of them didn't. They came over about half past two or three and they brought their wives and their children. Dad would sit in the living room with all the men, and they would get in a huddle and discuss all their problems, all their troubles, and everything they were going to do for the next week.

Mother had the women in the other room to entertain, and my sister and I had the little kids to entertain. Mother, bless her heart, was never prepared. She should have said, "Now look. If I'm going to have guests, let me know ahead of time." Of course, she should have known, but she was always hoping that they wouldn't stay to eat. Dad didn't care.

We'd have tea and coffee and sandwiches and nice canned apricots or peaches. And for dessert a piece of homemade cake or homemade cookies. Mother always made sandwiches out of homemade bread. The cooks always made the bread, but they couldn't make it like they made it in the bakeries. It made the lousiest sandwiches because it would fall apart. It would be awfully crumbly, and Mother'd be so embarrassed over it. But it didn't bother Dad in the least. Toward the end, I think she finally bought the bread.

SW: How many people could come?

LHH: Oh, sometimes there would be fifteen, twenty, twenty-five people. Sometimes there'd only be ten or fifteen.

SW: Were these get-togethers like staff meetings?

LHH: Yes. Dad always had them here instead of taking the State's time. When you got over there (Sacramento), you went to work. You didn't take time discussing. You had it all done. You knew what you were going to do when you arrived. You started right in the next morning at what you planned. That's what he expected all of us to do, and that's what I was brought up to do.

SW: Was his job a five-day a week job?

LHH: Five and a half days. He worked Saturday mornings.

SW: And Sunday afternoon too?

LHH: And Sunday afternoon. Oh, he looked forward to that Sunday afternoon because he really got his staff together. They talked everything out right there. If you didn't like something, you spoke right up there or you held your tongue. They had their chance to speak out.

SW: Did you have the feeling that his staff had a lot of trust in him?

LHH: They had a great deal of faith. He had wonderful, wonderful men. I don't know anybody that was disloyal to him. Some of the people were kind of lazy, and they got shifted around. He had no use for anybody lazy.

He only wanted men that were smart and loyal. He wanted a man that knew his work well, knew how to manage it, and carry it through. He looked for those men, and he found them. And they were fine men.

SW: He also seemed to be able to get people to work with him.

LHH: Oh, yes. They realized the value of what he had to say. As I said before, I argued with my dad for years, and 99 and 9/10 of the time he was right. That was the part that I guess a lot of people were irritated about. But he <u>was</u> right!

SW: Did his staff stay with him quite a while?

LHH: Always, except when Washington, D.C. hired them away. In fact, my husband Charles and I still get Christmas cards from several of the old staff members who are left. And Christmas cards from the old Agricultural Commissioners.

Travels

SW: Did he travel around the state quite a bit when he was Director of the Department of Agriculture?

LHH: Oh yes, he traveled in a car up and down the state. Many times he used to take me with him when he'd go down to meetings in southern California, to San Diego, and many places in the state I never would have gotten to.

When he was president of the Western States Plant Quarantine Board, I went to Victoria, British Columbia, to Utah, to many places with him. I really had a wonderful education.

SW: There's a story about one of his trips. He was driving up on the Oroville road and the bridge was out. Do you remember that?

LHH: He was going to a meeting, and he was supposed to be the speaker. He'd just gotten a new automobile from the Electric Garage in Woodland.

The bridge was out, but somebody had taken down the sign which said that the road was not open. He was going up this hill. All of a sudden no bridge. Fortunately this new car was a heavy car. Stopping the car wouldn't have done any good, so he just turned it one way and sort of scooted down the side of the creek. When he came to the meeting and was a little bit late, he told them, "I'm sorry I'm late. I had to jump over the creek where there was no bridge to get here." (laughter)

I remember another time when he was coming home from Sacramento when the new causeway was fairly new and there was a speed limit on it. I've forgotten what the limit was, probably 50 miles an hour, at the time. Anyway, somebody went by him, sailing right past him. It was foggy weather and pretty dangerous. So Dad followed this fellow and honked at him and made him stop. He said, "You were breaking the law. Come with me to the judge." Dad took him in to the judge in Davis, and he was fined. Dad didn't have a thing to do with the Motor Vehicles Department at all, and that wasn't the kind of a thing to do to the fellow at all, I guess. But he did it anyway. He was like the old bull calf. If he saw something that wasn't right, he was going to make it right.

Clubs and Organizations

SW: When your father was living here and you were growing up, he was always a very energetic man. In addition to his jobs, didn't he belong to several local organizations?

LHH: Yes. He was a member of the Grange, and of the Farm Bureau and of the Masons. He did a lot toward establishing a County Board of Trade. There was a Chamber of Commerce, but this was a County Board of Trade. I think it had more to do with agricultural things. When they put in that exhibit at the Fair in 1915, I know the County Board of Trade had a lot to do toward maintaining it.

SW: He belonged to these organizations in his earlier years, before he went to Sacramento?

LHH: He kept up his membership in the Grange and in the Farm Bureau, always.

SW: And wasn't there an Association of Agricultural Commissioners?

LHH: Yes. Dad was a member of that all of his life. He was made an honorary member the last years.

SW: Did they have an association of State Agricultural Commissioners?

LHH: Every County Agricultural Commissioner was a member of the State Agricultural Commissioners Association. I think it was during my father's time that that was established. I have an idea that he had a lot to do with that too, but he never talked much about it. You know, some things impressed me if he talked about them here.

SW: I noticed that one of the associations that your father belonged to was the Agriculture Committee of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.

LHH: Yes, and he belonged to the Commonwealth Club too. As well as several other clubs in San Francisco. When he was going down to San Francisco, he planned sometimes for his business to come on those days so that he could make his appointments and be with them for the luncheon meetings.

He quit going to a lot of the meetings when he started working in Sacramento because he just couldn't keep up with all of them and he didn't want to go out at night.

He always was one to go to bed early, and then by four or five in the morning, he was rarin' to go. Most of all, Dad loved his work. He was so proud of his department and he was so proud of his men. He was also proud of what they did for agriculture in California and in the west. And he was so very proud of the University of California.

He had loyal friends in the University. He and the University never fought ever. The University was the educational part, and the Department of Agriculture was the enforcement part, and they worked together just like twins. He had great respect for all professors over there, and they for him. And that's why he was so thrilled with that LLD that he got from the University.

Hecke Awarded Honorary Degree

He was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of California on March 23, 1936. I think one of the happiest moments of his entire life was when Bob Sproul gave him that degree. He loved that. He was just dancing on the cloud seven. After that he liked to be called "Doctor" whenever he possibly could be. He never had really had a college degree. He had gone to all those colleges in Europe, but in those days they were not what a college is now. They were fine schools for their time. Kew Gardens now has developed so it is one of the very finest in the whole world, but it wasn't then. And so, that degree meant everything to him.

He had a bronze plaque made of the statement on the degree (quoted at the beginning of this chapter). We have it hanging in the house. He always said, "I want that to be on my gravestone." Outside of his family and the Department, that was just it.

THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

IN RECOGNITION OF HIS MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE CONFERRED
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LAWS UPON

GEORGE HENRY HECKE

FARMER, STOCKMAN, HORTICULTURIST · ABLE ORGANIZER AND FIRST DIRECTOR OF CALIFORNIA'S EXCELLENT STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · ALERT AND ZEALOUS GUARDIAN OF THE WELFARE OF THE STATE'S BASIC INDUSTRY · PROTECTOR OF HER CROPS AND LIVESTOCK AGAINST THE RAVAGES OF FOREIGN INSECTS AND DISEASES · LOYAL SERVANT OF YOUR ADOPTED PEOPLE

IN WITNESS WHEREOF THIS DIPLOMA IS INSCRIBED WITH THE SIGNATURES OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REGENTS AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY, AND TO IT HAS BEEN AFFIXED THE OFFICIAL SEAL

GIVEN AT BERKELEY THIS TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF MARCH, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIX, AND OF THIS UNIVERSITY THE SIXTY-EIGHTH

Frank F. Merriam
GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA AND PRESIDENT OF THE REGENTS

Robert Gordon Sproul
PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

One of the proudest days in the life of George Hecke was March 23, 1936, when he was awarded the Doctor of Laws degree by the University of California.

Other Honors

LHH: The other big honor that he received was la Croix du Ouissam Alaouite, a decoration equivalent to the cross of the French Legion of Honor. He got a medal with that from the Algerian government.

SW: Do you recall whether that was for some specific thing that he had done?

LHH: He was a personal help to a French delegation, headed by Professor A. Trintignac, which came to California in 1930 to study our agricultural practices and administration. Dad showed them what the State Department of Agriculture was doing. As a result of this study, the Algerian agricultural administration was modeled very largely after California's. Dad was invited to go to Algeria to take charge of laying the foundation of their agricultural development, but he didn't go.

LHH: I can remember another time when someone from abroad asked for Dad's help. In Japan they were worried about their race being so short. They wanted to be taller people. They felt that maybe what they ate had something to do with it. They sent men over here to contact Dad and the Department about our food habits. They finally decided that milk was one of the foods that they needed. They needed more milk and richer milk. The men were very appreciative. They sent him a silk plaque. It was very, very valuable, an original by a very famous man in Japan. What I'm trying to say is that they were most appreciative. They didn't give him a degree, they gave him the plaque.

SW: In fact, not only was your father recognized in California, but also internationally.

LHH: Yes. And people came over from England, a few from Germany, many more from Japan than from any other country, and also from Morocco. There may have been others.

Retirement

SW: When your father retired in 1931 from the Department of Agriculture, what did he do then?

LHH: He was here on the ranch for a couple of years. He managed the ranch and lived right here and took care of everything. My husband Charles was Yolo County Agricultural Commissioner at the time, and our children were small.

But Dad wasn't ever very happy about retirement. He didn't have much to do and he still had enough energy to want to be busy. So, after he was home about three or four years, he was asked to develop and to manage the Agriculture Building at the San Francisco World's Fair at Treasure Island in 1939. Because of his association with all the farmers all over the state of California, he had no trouble whatever in getting people to take part in the Fair. He arranged for all the different organizations to set up booths in the Agriculture Building. They would buy space, put in their own exhibits and take care of them. Of course, the building was paid for by the state, but he managed it and he filled it. It was self-supporting; the State didn't have to come in and help pay for anything.

SW: The fair was actually open in 1939 and 1940. When did your father begin his work on it?

LHH: Oh, it was at least two years before that, in 1936 or '37, I would say. He did a lot of organizational work, traveling up and down the state, contacting his friends and asking people for support. He had a state car at that time, and he drove back and forth every day to Treasure Island.

SW: It was during the Fair that your mother died, wasn't it?

LHH: Yes, she died in 1938. It was a great blow to Dad. After that he seemed to slow down. I don't think he realized how much Mother paved the way for him. It was almost like someone sweeping the path ahead of him, getting rid of some of his troubles. Not the State work, but the little things here at home. Her death was a great, great blow to him. And after that he didn't even stay clear to the end of the Fair. A man by the name of Mr. Clark from Auburn took over the last few months of the Fair.

SW: Was your father pretty much in seclusion here after that?

LHH: Yes. More and more he left the ranch up to Charles and me. Then in 1945 he turned the ranch over to us completely. He just didn't want to be bothered with it.

SW: But he still had a lot of energy. What was he doing to occupy his time?

LHH: He went to Sacramento a great deal to see his friends. He and Governor Merriam were good friends. He went to see him and he went to the Department a lot, and he traveled up and down the state a lot.

SW: Was he a consultant?

LHH: He was to a certain extent. I don't remember what it was. He went to a lot of places, and he gave a few speeches, not too many. He was never very fond of talking and he was never a particularly good public speaker.

SW: Did he have a German accent?

LHH: I didn't notice it, but there were a few friends who said he did. He always called the Southern Pacific the "Sowthern Pacific", I remember that. There are a few who remembered that he used to say, "The State Department of Agriculture is the best Department of Agriculture in the United States, and that is the department of 'vich' I am the head." He must have had an accent, I don't know. I was brought up with him and I didn't notice if he had.

Hecke and the Swimming Pool

SW: There was another story about your father. Didn't he swim in his pool every day?

LHH: Oh yes. Every morning and every night he swam in the pool. When he was in France as a young man he would swim the Seine River. He was one of the very few students over there that could. He was an avid swimmer. And in 1915 he put in a pool here. There was only one other pool in Woodland at that time. It had to be built above ground, not like they build them today, because we didn't have the water pumps to pump it out. So it had to be above ground in order to drain it out and use the water for irrigation around the yard.

We didn't have a Pool Sweep or anything like that to keep the pool clean, so once a week it had to be cleaned. If you didn't clean it out, algae would form on the side of the pool and some of those biting bugs would get into it.

Dad would swim early in the morning. He'd get up before the men came over here for breakfast. In the summertime he'd be swimming when they came in, and he'd go over and talk to them in his bathing suit. And then in the summertime when it was warm, he'd go swimming in the evening before he went to bed.

Well, this one night, he'd gone out and he'd forgotten that he had told the gardener that it was time to clean the pool before the weekend. It was probably on a Friday night. There were no lights out there, and he dove into the pool and it was empty. But, fortunately, the algae were all over the sides and it was slick. He hit it and he cut his head. His whole face was black and blue. He could hardly see out of his eyes. His thumbs were turned back when he hit the pool, and his hands were black and blue. His head was thrown back onto his chest, and he was pretty badly banged up and hurt. But fortunately the slickness of the algae skidded him and saved his life.

SW: How old was he?

LHH: Oh, he must have been about 77 when he did that.

He came over to the little house where my husband and I were living. It was dark, around 8 o'clock, I guess. It was in the fall of the year. It got dark early before we had Daylight Saving time. He was the most pathetic-looking picture.

Charles said, "Leila, you call up Dr. Woolsey at the Clinic. I'll get him in the car and I'll take him right in." He took him in and they fixed Dad all up. He didn't have any broken bones, but he was a mess. I think he had a few stitches in his face and maybe in his hand. Nothing bad. It got to be quite the joke that he'd go swimming in a pool without any water in it.

Dark Evening Swim

He jumped in the air
With the greatest of ease
A daring old guy
Without a chemise.

It sure was a dare
For the pool was bare
No success did he meet
In breaking concrete.

But sixteen good stitches
Fixed up broken ridges
In his corrugated brow
And -- so that was "how."

George H. Hecke
September 26th., 1947.

SW: Did he swim in the winter too?

LHH: Oh, he'd swim from March until November. He just loved that. I know Martha and I used to hate it. He used to get us up in the morning and make us go out to the pool and swim with him. "It's healthy for you. Get up and do it." That water was cold!

But we'd get dressed and have breakfast. And never did we come down to breakfast in our bathrobes. None of us, ever. There were men on the ranch, and you were not to be seen in your bathrobes. That was the law of this house. Once many years later, I let my girls come down in their bathrobes. They had been out partying late at night. And the next morning he was disgusted with me.

Later Years

SW: He lived until 1953. Was he doing informal consulting approximately the last 15 years of his life?

LHH: Until about the last five years.

SW: Was he in good health?

LHH: Yes. He was slowing down a lot at the last. He had arthritis quite a little bit. He had help who came in and took care of the house. I lived in the little house and I could come here and supervise things. I did all the buying for the house and the kitchen.

He had a gardener he liked, who took care of the yard work around the house. Dad didn't do it himself. He was never one to do it himself. He said, "You don't want to work your hands. You want to work your head."

SW: Did he do any writing?

LHH: Not to speak of. He wrote lots and lots and lots of letters. He corresponded with people in agriculture. The last lady that he had, the last five years, could type, and she did his typing for him.

Many of the people he wrote to came here to visit him. He had lots and lots of guests and he enjoyed them. Here in the house we've had many of the Governors stay over night. We've had men from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the heads of many departments in California visit. Dad enjoyed having them. He liked people. When he got so he didn't want to go out very much, they'd come here to visit him.

SW: And when he died, he had a heart attack?

LHH: Yes. He was 83.

Other Impressions of George Hecke

We asked other people who knew George Hecke to help us create a picture of him. One of the people we talked to was Charles Hardy, George Hecke's son-in-law.

SW: Charles, when did you meet George Hecke?

CH: I met George Hecke after I had starting going with Leila while I was teaching school in Los Angeles. He was a man who was on the road a lot. He used to go back to Washington, and he had a lot of other interests besides. He suggested that he'd like to have somebody come up and look after the farm here. So, Leila encouraged me to come to Woodland. It wasn't such a good combination to live so close to your parents, but she said, "Come on, we'll get by anyway." And just about that time the Depression hit us, so it was lucky that I came here.

We were married on June 3, 1928, and we came here and lived in a little house.

SW: I'm trying to build a picture of George Hecke. Do you remember what your impressions were of him when you first met him?

CH: Yes. I was just a little bit frightened of the way he was able to talk to me in such a positive manner. I said to myself, "That's a cannonball." Because he was full of fire and vigor. And everything he did, he did in high gear. It was always high gear, always "right now, right now."

And he was truly a disciplinarian. It was good for me. My father was always a good disciplinarian, so it didn't bother me too much. It was just on the surface, I found out after living here a short time with him.

Next we talked to George Hecke's granddaughter, Charlotte Hardy Johnson. She grew up in the little house on the Yolanda Ranch with her parents and grandparents.

Her Childhood Recollections of Hecke

SW: Charlotte, would you tell some recollections you had as a child on Yolanda?

CHJ: I can remember quite distinctly when I was quite young that the prune dryer caught on fire. I was out playing with my brother, and all of a sudden we saw this huge blaze.

We were taught never to interrupt my grandfather, especially when they were all discussing business. I came rushing in to try to tell him that the dryer was on fire, and I had to wait until he finally finished talking, and I informed him of the fire. Everyone practically knocked me down getting out the door and asked, "Why didn't I tell them sooner?" But, I had been taught never to interrupt, especially my grandfather.

And I distinctly remember when my grandfather used to go to San Francisco every day. That was a long trip, especially in the late thirties. He was in charge of the Agricultural Building at the World's Fair. He had young drivers, driving back and forth each day.

I also remember vaguely, maybe it's just hearing stories, when he received his LLD degree from the University of California at Berkeley. There was great excitement in the house that day.

SW: What do you remember about your grandfather's personality?

CHJ: He was the most colorful man I think I've ever known in my whole life. I admired him. I got awfully mad at him at times because his word was always law. But I was terribly fond of him. He wasn't the particular type of grandfather that you could cuddle and hug since he was always business. He loved us and he spent time with us as much as possible, when it worked into his schedule.

Oh, I went fabulous places with him and did many interesting things. For instance, for Picnic Day at Davis, I never stood with the rest of the people to watch the parade. I was always up in the grandstand with my grandfather. And at the State Fair and World's Fair, I always had special passes.

When I was a teenager and we went to Lake Tahoe with him, I thought he was awfully stubborn at times and not too much fun because he liked everything his way. You didn't really get too much leeway. But he did mellow a lot as he got older. Most older people do.

Growing up, I was a lot closer to my grandmother because, first of all, my grandfather wasn't home very much. He traveled a great deal. I practically lived in their house growing up. My grandmother and I were extremely close, even though she died when I was only nine years old. I was kind of like a companion to her. We spent all our summers together, and I spent after school with her also. I always kind of resented when he came home because he interrupted our fun.

SW: From what I can gather, he was widely respected.

CHJ: Very widely respected because you knew where you stood with him. A lot of times other people's feelings weren't important. He just said what came right out.

He was so entirely different from his own father. My mother was always telling me about her grandfather. He was a gentle, dear man who played a great deal with my mother.

SW: Your mother told me that your grandfather's father made furniture.

CHJ: Yes, my great grandfather was an excellent cabinet maker. He made that secretary over there (pointing). He never used nails and he carved all the altar chairs in St. Michael's Church in Hamburg.

Man of Many Facets

And my grandfather was very musical and artistic, besides everything else. He loved opera, symphony and things like that. He was very clever with poetry and with sketches. He was very artistic besides all else. It doesn't sound like it would go together, but it did.

We all loved flowers, and I do too. Grandfather used to arrange flowers, and he did very well with them. He always had a variety of flowers growing in the garden, and he would go out and pick them and put them in the vase himself.

The gardens on the ranch were patterned after Kew Gardens in London. He was one of the architects of Kew Gardens when he was living in England as a

young man. He was selected as the one to present the design of the gardens to Queen Victoria. He loved to tell the story of how he bowed to the Queen and all. He felt very proud of being chosen to make the presentation.

He was a man of many facets. He would go through the botanical books, find a misspelled word and bring it to our attention.

He was always proficient in German, French and English.

SW: Several people have commented that a fair amount of his success as Director of the Department of Agriculture was due to the fact that he knew so many people in the farming business around the state, he had their respect, and he could get them to work together.

CHJ: Oh yes, he was great at doing that and was a great organizer.

Retirement

He was not a modest man by any means. It was always "the department of 'vich' I am the head." Retirement, I think, was very difficult for him because he still had the energy. And yet he knew that he had to retire, and he hated being out of the limelight. You see, he was there for almost twenty years. And he would said, "My department was so good even the Democrats didn't throw me out."

He didn't actually retire after he left the department. He went on to take on the World's Fair at Treasure Island.

Another thing, he was asked to be Secretary of Agriculture under President Hoover. The reason he did not accept was that at the time there was just no state retirement system at all. I think that when he retired, he received maybe $6 a month, after 20 years. So he was interested in building up his own retirement system, working with the ranch and all.

SW: Another reason might have been that he didn't want to go back and live in Washington.

CHJ: Not really. He spent a lot of time back there, but he really loved it here better. I think he might have gone back to Washington for four years had circumstances been a little bit different.

Another thing about my grandfather, he loved to be called "Dr. Hecke."

When he got older, I used to drive him around a lot. He finally got his driver's license taken away, and that was very, very difficult on him.

And I'm sure Mother told you about the time he dove in the swimming pool without any water in it. He fortunately had done like this (put her arms up around her head), and being chubby, this helped him survive. He had a big gash and he had many stitches taken. I never saw a scar on someone that age heal so well.

Of course, he was very badly bruised, so he used to use a cane. The cane brought him a lot of attention. He'd walk up and down Main Street in Woodland, and of course people would stop and ask him what happened.

He was written up in Herb Caen's column (in the San Francisco Chronicle), and this was very delightful to him. Finally one day he was very mad about something, and he said, "By God, I got more publicity for diving in my swimming pool with no clothes on than I ever did for all the work for the state of California!"

The next person we talked to about Dr. Hecke was Herbert Chandler, Yolo County's current Agricultural Commissioner.

SW: Mr. Chandler, did you know George Hecke personally?

HC: Yes. I probably first met Dr. Hecke when I was a very small boy in 1932. I used to live on my grandfather's dairy ranch about a half mile south of Yolanda.

It's interesting that four Agricultural Commissioners have come from the same area of Yolo County -- road 99 between road 25A and a half mile south of 25A. First there was Dr. Hecke, then I believe it was William Gould, and then came Charles Hardy, and after Charles I came in. None of us got into the position because of knowledge of the other, or really contact with each other. It just happened that way.

I was in the service in World War II, and came back and started working for Charles Hardy on June 5, 1946. At that time I renewed my acquaintance with Dr. Hecke.

SW: Did you ever work with him?

HC: No, not professionally, although I visited Dr. Hecke many times, took trips with him, went to Lake Tahoe with him. We used to take short little rides and look at the country. I was socially close to Dr. Hecke.

SW: In 1946 was Dr. Hecke still a healthy and vigorous man?

HC: Dr. Hecke always had a keen, sharp mind. He was just a tremendous individual who never forgot a face, was interested in the State Department (of Agriculture) and in Yolo County. I think his main love at that time was Tahoe.

SW: The Heckes had a home there, didn't they?

HC: Yes, about 100 yards north of Homewood, right on the lake. The home goes back. It has a tremendous history in it, in the early part of the 1900s.

SW: Would you say that you had a lot of respect for Dr. Hecke as a leader in Agriculture?

HC: Dr. Hecke was in a class all by himself. The man learned his profession the hard way in Europe, and then he came to California. He took nothing and made something out of it. He took the State Department (of Agriculture) when it was in a chaotic condition, pulled together various boards and commissions, and brought out of that the Department of Food and Agriculture. Yes, the man was great. He is still very much respected as an individual in our current-day Department of Food and Agriculture. Those that never knew Dr. Hecke have heard of him from others. They've read some of the old pamphlets and books.

SW: Did you know about the time he dived into the empty swimming pool?

HC: Yes, I know all about that. That wasn't really his fault; he had told the gardener to drain the pool. It was his habit to go swimming at night after dark to relax and enjoy himself. That night he went out to go swimming and the pool was empty. I don't believe there are many eighty-year-old men around that could dive off of a diving board into an empty pool that was ten feet down to solid concrete and really not get hurt. That old boy was in excellent shape.

You know, he loved animals. He loved dogs, particularly German Shepherds. I can remember every time I saw Dr. Hecke out at the ranch when I was a small boy, he had these German Shepherds with him. One time he told me, "Always love a dog." I didn't understand that then, but I realized later in life that here was a man who was very hard, very self-disciplined, but who still had time for love for children and animals.

I remember another story about Dr. Hecke. One time we went up to Lake Tahoe. He had to be in his eighties then. The electricity was off. This was on an early Sunday morning. So he said, "Let's go down to the plumbing shop and see the plumber." I couldn't understand that, but I went down and knocked on the door. The window on the second story opened up and a woman stuck her head out and said, "What do you want?" I said, "The electricity is off down at the...." I wasn't able to finish the sentence when this man hollered out, "I'm a plumber, not an electrician." I said, "Ma'am, I understand that, but Dr. Hecke said...." The minute I mentioned Dr. Hecke's name, two feet hit the floor, and you could hear them hit the floor. He said, "I will be there in five minutes." And the plumber was there in five minutes to turn on the electricity. All you had to do was to mention the name "Dr. Hecke" and people listened.

SW: I have read newspaper clippings about Dr. Hecke. They all paint a picture of a very capable and hard-working man who seemed to get things done. He received honors, but he kept plowing away whether he got the honors or not. Is that the way you recall him?

HC: I think you've painted a good picture of Dr. Hecke. No, I don't think anybody can graphically describe Dr. Hecke. He was so sensitive, yet so vigorous and so demanding of men. He demanded more of himself than of others, but he still demanded from others.

We had his old secretary, Kathleen Brown. She worked for us when she was in her seventies reestablishing our files. She used to comment many times how sensitive he was. But on the other hand, you soon found out that whatever your job was, he expected you to put in 110% of that job.

SW: Was she devoted to him?

HC: Absolutely dedicated. She worked for him for many years, and when she went to work for us, she was still Dr. Hecke's secretary.

We next talked about Dr. Hecke with W.C. Jacobsen. Mr. Jacobsen worked on Dr. Hecke's staff for thirteen years and was made Acting Director of the Department of Agriculture when Dr. Hecke retired. He later served as Director of the department from June 5, 1954 to December 31, 1959, after four months as Acting Director (February 1, 1954 - May 31, 1954).

SW: Mr. Jacobsen, when did you first meet George Hecke?

WCJ: I first met him at the meeting of the County Horticultural Commissioners in November 1917 when they had their annual meeting here in Sacramento. About a month later, he called and asked me to go to work for him, and I started to work for him the last week in 1917.

SW: When you first began working for Dr. Hecke, you were a young man just out of college. Did you have respect for him?

WCJ: Oh yes, very much so. He had a rather dynamic personality and I admired his vision. He relied upon people that had technical knowledge to help him out if he needed information on a particular problem.

SW: Did you feel that he really had the good of agriculture as his goal, as others have said?

WCJ: That's right. He was also very open and frank and above board about his goals, regardless of the compensation. When the heads of other departments were getting raises in their salaries and compensation, he certainly wasn't any booster for himself! I can remember when the Director of Agriculture was getting $6000, and I think there were other heads of departments that were getting between $15,000 and $20,000. So he was modest in his own personal desires. I can recall that. People would say, "Why doesn't that guy ask for more money?" Well, he said that the thing that was most important is not the salary that the head of the Department of Agriculture gets, the importance is that he actually helps the agricultural industry.

He utilized the staff capabilities of the Department to the best advantage that I know of, and he was on very fine cooperative relations with the U.S. Department of Agriculture at all times. He didn't go to Washington very frequently, but he utilized telephone communications with the people. He knew the leaders back there in Washington pretty well and he'd get in touch with them. He had a rather remarkable memory for people and their ratings, if you please. He had a very high regard for quite a few of the heads of departments of agriculture in the other states.

SW: Could he talk with them on a first-name basis?

WCJ: Oh, yes, very definitely so. That's right.

Sunday Staff Meetings

SW: He also used direct personal communication with his staff, I understand, often having his staff meetings on a Sunday afternoon at his home. Did you attend any of those?

WCJ: (Laughter). Oh, always.

SW: Would you tell me about them?

WCJ: It was convenient for him. There were quite a few of the people in the Department who thought he could have just as well called the group together

while there were office hours here in Sacramento. But really when it came right down to it, it was one important way he got better acquainted with his people, the people that he was relying on to carry out his responsibilities as head not only of the old State Commission of Horticulture, but also of the State Department of Agriculture when it was created.

SW: Did he invite the families to come along?

WCJ: Oh yes. He'd be happy to have the wife or any of the kids that they wanted to bring. Mrs. Hecke and the girls, Leila and Martha, they always had some way of taking care of those people that came. While it was a burden sometimes when people had planned their Saturdays or Sundays for something else, maybe long in advance, they'd find that he expected them to be in attendance when he made a call for them to come.

Very frequently, it was Friday of the week and he'd say, "Well, I'd like to have the group together out at the ranch tomorrow or the next day." But sometimes he'd call at 5:00 in the morning of the day of the meeting. It wasn't unusual. But on the other hand, I never at any time felt over-burdened or out of sorts, because I expected that was part of my responsibility when I was working under his direction. If that's the way he wanted it and it made him a better executive, why that was my job.

SW: Do you think that the other division and bureau heads shared your view of those Sunday meetings?

WCJ: Well, some of them had other plans very frequently, and there were a few that grumbled a little about it, but I don't think there was too much resentment against it.

SW: Did you find him fair in these meetings? Did you trust him?

WCJ: Oh yes, definitely. Without question. He had a purpose and he generally fulfilled it with that way of doing things.

III. GEORGE HECKE AND THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

One of George Hecke's mottoes was: "If right, to be kept right. If wrong, to be set right."

In the ten years after George Hecke bought the Yolanda Ranch in 1909, he spent more and more time away from the ranch. He always returned to it, however, and he continued to do so throughout his long life. But there were many things to "set right," and so he worked on projects for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the University of California and the County of Yolo.

George Hecke was 46 years old when he began to work for the California State government in Sacramento. Within the next fifteen years he changed for all future generations the regulation of agriculture in California. He used his remarkable talent for organization to enhance a system of regulatory and service agencies to promote and protect agriculture not only in California but throughout the West.

In 1919, three years after he was appointed State Commissioner of Horticulture, he achieved the creation of the California Department of Agriculture and of the Western Plant Quarantine Board. In 1924 he proved to be the "alert, zealous guardian of the state's basic industry" when he quickly perceived the danger of the Foot and Mouth epidemic and launched the massive campaign that eradicated the disease in California in a year's time.

He served as the first Director of the Department of Agriculture under four California Governors. He worked effectively with Governors and legislators to get the authority and the money he deemed necessary to achieve his goal, which was to make his department the best in the United States. By 1929 the structure of the regulatory system he conceived was virtually complete when the California State Board of Agriculture was created. He resigned from his position as Director on January 1, 1931, three days before his 61st birthday.

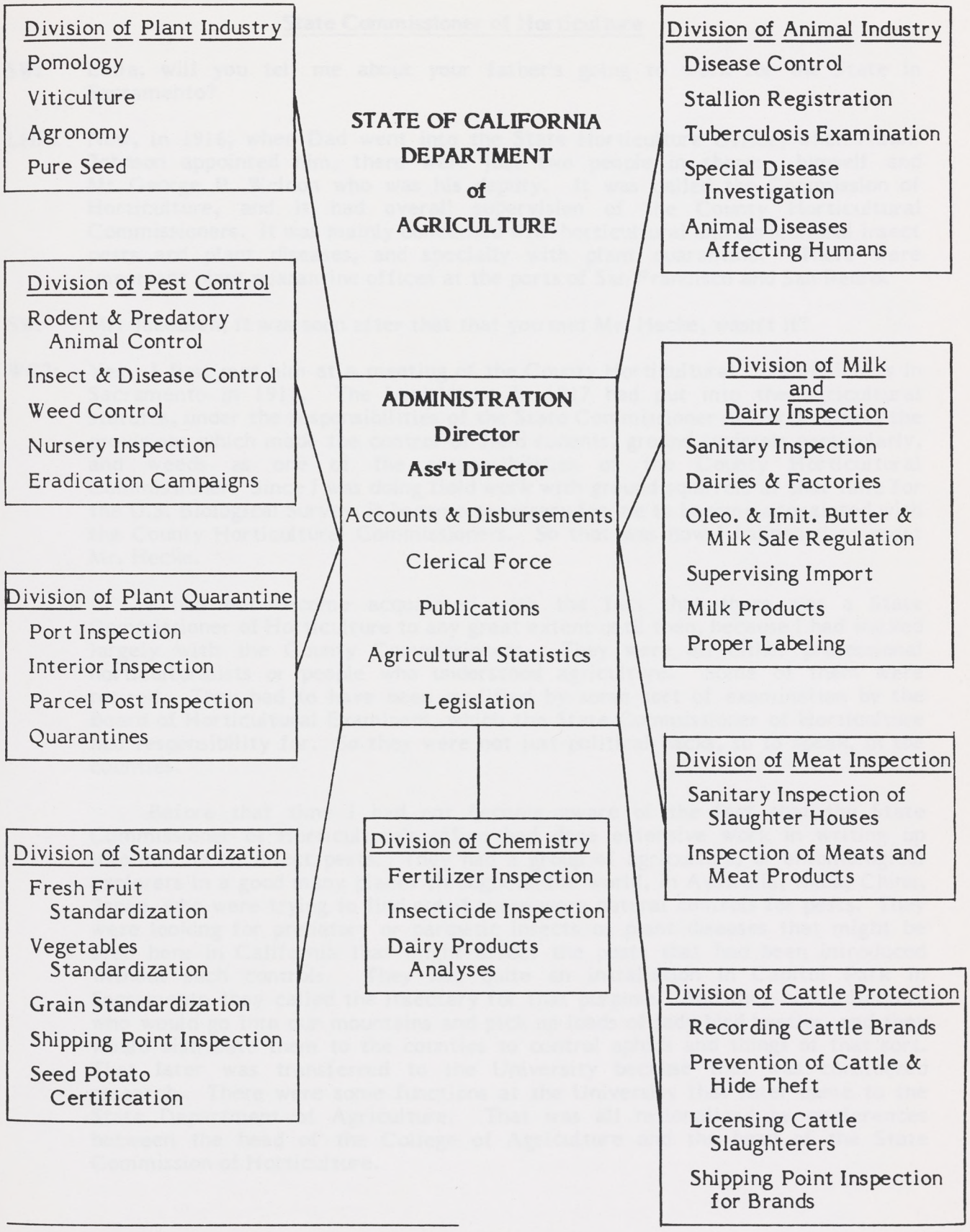
George Hecke's role as Director of the Department of Agriculture is described here by two people who viewed him from very different perspectives. We talked to Leila Hecke Hardy, who lived on the Yolanda Ranch with her father before, during and after his term as Director, and to W.C. Jacobsen, who worked for Mr. Hecke all the years he was Director and who later held the position of Director himself for five and a half years. Although each narrator was interviewed separately, their accounts are integrated into one chapter for the sake of the story.

Creation of the California Department of Agriculture

George H. Hecke describes the new department in the "Report of the California Department of Agriculture for the Year Ending June 30, 1920":

> On May 16, 1919, Governor Wm. D. Stephens signed the bill creating the California Department of Agriculture. Since the term "Department of Agriculture" is often used indiscriminately by the laity it is well to distinguish between the names and functions of the departments of the state often so designated. The State College of Agriculture and Agricultural Experiment Station, at Berkeley, often spoken of as the Department of Agriculture, is, as its name implies, an organization for the creation and and dissemination of agricultural knowledge. The State Board of Agriculture, at Sacramento, otherwise known as the State Agricultural Society, conducts the annual State Fair, aids materially in the conduct of a number of local, county, and district fairs, and publishes annually the statistical report of that board. The newly created State Department of Agriculture is an organization charged with the protection of California's agriculture through the enforcement of the horticultural and agricultural laws and is primarily an agricultural police department. . . .
>
> By the terms of the act creating the Department of Agriculture the Director succeeded to, and was vested with, all of the duties, powers, purposes, responsibilities, and jurisdiction of the State Commissioner of Horticulture, State Board of Horticultural Examiners, State Dairy Bureau, State Veterinarian, Stallion Registration Board, State Board of Viticultural Commissioners, Board of Citrus Fruit Shipments, Cattle Protection Board, and was given the power and charged with the duty of administering and enforcing the Fertilizer Act, the Insecticide and Fungicide Act, an Act to Regulate the Production of Certified Milk, and other minor acts.
>
> The chief purposes of the organization were to promote efficiency and economy in the administration of the laws, formerly enforced by the several independent boards and commissions. That both efficiency and economy have resulted is evidenced by this report. The total appropriations for all the old boards and commissions which were combined as the Department of Agriculture exceeded the appropriations available to the new Department by over seventeen thousand dollars. . . .

California State Department of Agriculture, The Monthly Bulletin. Vol. IX, No. 10. October-November, 1920, pp. 399-400.



California Department of Agriculture, The Monthly Bulletin, 1919, p. 407.

State Commissioner of Horticulture

SW: Leila, will you tell me about your father's going to work for the State in Sacramento?

LHH: Now, in 1916, when Dad went into the State Horticulture Office, when Hiram Johnson appointed him, there were just two people in there: himself and Mr. George P. Weldon who was his deputy. It was called the Commission of Horticulture, and it had overall supervision of the County Horticultural Commissioners. It was mainly concerned with horticultural and agricultural insect pests and plant diseases, and specially with plant quarantine. There were important plant quarantine offices at the ports of San Francisco and San Pedro.

SW: Mr. Jacobsen, it was soon after that that you met Mr. Hecke, wasn't it?

WCJ: Yes. I first met him at a meeting of the County Horticultural Commissioners in Sacramento in 1917. The Legislature in 1917 had put into the agricultural statutes, under the responsibilities of the State Commissioner of Horticulture, the provisions which made the control of field rodents, ground squirrels particularly, and weeds as one of the responsibilities of the County Horticultural Commissioner. Since I was doing field work with ground squirrels at that time for the U.S. Biological Survey, it became necessary for me to become acquainted with the County Horticultural Commissioners. So that was how I happened to meet Mr. Hecke.

I had not become acquainted with the fact that there was a State Commissioner of Horticulture to any great extent until then, because I had worked largely with the County Commissioners. They were all either professional horticulturalists or people who understood agriculture. Some of them were retired. They had to have been qualified by some sort of examination by the Board of Horticultural Examiners, which the State Commissioner of Horticulture had responsibility for. So they were not just political hacks, so to speak, in the counties.

Before that time I had not become aware of the fact that the State Commissioner of Horticulture's office had done extensive work in writing up information on insect pests. They had a group of agricultural or entomological explorers in a good many places throughout the world, in Australia, India, China, Japan, who were trying to find out if there were natural controls for pests. They were looking for predatory or parasitic insects or plant diseases that might be bred here in California that might affect the pests that had been introduced without such controls. They had quite an installation in Capitol Park in Sacramento they called the Insectary for that purpose. And they had collectors who would go into our mountains and pick up loads of lady bird beetles, and they would distribute them to the counties to control aphids and things of that sort. That later was transferred to the University because that was considered research. There were some functions at the University that later came to the State Department of Agriculture. That was all rationalized by conferences between the head of the College of Agriculture and the head of the State Commission of Horticulture.

SW: Leila, when your father was appointed State Commissioner of Horticulture, he held that job for about three years. During that time, he decided that he needed to get all the agricultural agencies together. How did he do that?

LHH: He developed a plan which combined the horticultural, pest control and plant quarantine functions of the Commission of Horticulture with Animal Industry. Viticulture, Weights and Measures, Federal-State Statistics, Market News, Agricultural Chemistry and other services. And he brought them all into one department. Of course, he had opposition. Naturally, they all liked their own independent departments. But I think they all found that they were not lost; that there was power in numbers; and they worked together.

Some of these functions may have been added after 1919, but in general the agricultural leaders and Governor Stephens were in accord with the plan, and the 1919 Legislature put it into effect.

The Department of Agriculture was well-organized. It was beautifully managed. The men at the head of each one of the departments were excellent men, the very best he could get. His Department was considered the best in the United States and other states copied many of his ideas.

I would like to mention some of the men who meant so very much to my father. Much of his success depended upon these capable men: Avery Hoyt and Lee Strong first started out in the quarantine work with him. Then W.C. Jacobsen graduated from the University of California and came to work for him. He stayed with Dad all through his term and served later as Director of Agriculture. He was very knowledgeable in all his work. He had a lovely wife and daughters. He was Dad's assistant as the head of the Plant Industry and of Weeds and Rodent Control.

Then there was David Mackie, who was head of Entomology and Plant Quarantine; D.G. Milbraith in Plant Pathology; and Mr. Levers who was the Accountant. Some of these men went on to serve Dad's successor as well. There was C.U. Duckworth, the Animal Industry man; Bill Kuhrt, Head of Marketing. There was a Mr. Armitage who did a lot with the office in San Francisco and later headed up Entomology in Sacramento. George York was Market News. Stan Rogers and Mr. Poulsen were the Fruit and Vegetable Standardization men. Mr. W.F. Allewelt was Head of Shipping Point Inspection, as was Fred W. Read who later managed the California Fruit Exchange. These are just a few of the men who were devoted to their work, to Dad and to the State of California. I don't think you could have ever found a finer bunch of men. They were hard-working; they planned; they worked; they did everything to the best of their ability. Without them Dad never could have succeeded like he did.

SW: Mr. Jacobsen, I understand that state regulation of agriculture had begun some time before this.

WCJ: Oh, it started way back years and years before. You see, the first real agricultural organization that coordinated the efforts of a group of farmers was the State Viticultural Commission. It came into being in 1880. In the process of the development of the State Viticultural Commission, some of the horticultural people said, "Well, why can't we have fruit trees in there? Why can't we at least have a representative on the Commission or have an employee who is a horticulturalist?"

Then, by action of the 1917 Legislature, the State Commission of Horticulture absorbed the old State Viticultural Commission. The reason that I'm well aware of that is that when I went to work for the State in 1918, I inherited the office that the State Viticultural Commission had, and it was the best office location in all of Sacramento.

SW: Were there various agricultural commissions at that time?

WCJ: Yes. Horticulture, State Veterinarian, the Cattle Protection Board that registered hides and brands, and others. They were all separate. Each had a separate office here in Sacramento and a separate budget.

SW: And Hecke's plan brought these all together into one department?

WCH: Yes. The first annual report of the State Department of Agriculture pretty well shows his thinking and how it developed. He felt that agriculture throughout the state needed better organization within itself. You had the Grange, probably the original general farmer organization, somewhat lodge-like, the Farmers Union, and then later the Farm Bureau developed. That came along in association with the Agricultural Extension service, which had official connection with each County Farm Bureau, with the College of Agriculture for the State, and with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Each of them had representatives appearing before the Legislature. The coops were represented by the Agricultural Legislative Committee.

So far as I know, each of these groups supported the plan. Not to be forgotten are the annual Fruit Growers' Conventions, of which there were sixty-nine, starting in the 1870s and ending in 1937. They each had a strong Resolutions Committee, and after the offical state and county horticultural agencies were created by the Legislature, these conventions were associated with them. They had resolutions supporting the creation of a State Department of Agriculture.

And then there were the various regulatory agencies. Hecke brought together into the Department the State Dairy Bureau, the State Veterinarian and the State Weights and Measures work. Not all in the beginning, no. Some of those functions were added later. Bee inspection, for example. There was an apiary inspection law that was created to put a uniform system of bee inspection in all of the counties. Many of the counties had county bee inspectors, but their responsibilities were at variance.

And the Weights and Measures work that was handled by County Sealers of Weights and Measures or Deputy State Sealers of Weights and Measures was finally coordinated in 1921. It had been under the charge of a fellow who later was elected State Treasurer, Gus Johnson. He had the political viewpoint, not just the importance of honest weights and measures. Later, when we had lots of automobiles, why, gasoline measurement and all of that came in.

There were so many things. Hecke had real vision about integrating these things in such a way that they fitted into the organization of the Department as he had visualized it from the very beginning.

Services of the Department of Agriculture*

SW: Leila, do you know about the various services your father included in the Department of Agriculture?

LHH: Yes. There was the standardization and inspection of California field crops. L.M. Jeffers, called Jeff, was the head of that. He was very good. This service was a big help to the farmers. You see, a farmer would raise grain, we'll say, or flax or alfalfa, for seed. If a farmer took special care of his crop, kept the noxious weeds down, he had good seed to sell. The poor, lax farmer would have his fields full of weeds. But he'd harvest his crop all up together, put it on the market, and sell it for seed. When a farmer bought the seed, he had no knowledge of its purity. After the seed standardization regulations were adopted, the farmers had to meet certain tests before the seed was allowed to be sold in the state. If a grain firm bought the grain seeds, they had to clean it if it wasn't up to standards.

Then there were the fresh fruit and vegetable standardization laws that were carried over from the State Commissioner of Horticulture. The Standard Apple Act dates back to 1913. The chief of this work was Mr. Stan Rogers, who had taught Horticulture and Fruit Quality at the University Farm at Davis.

Here's an example of what Mr. Rogers' men would do. You used to find the big strawberries on top of the box, with the little green ones on the bottom. They stopped all that. The men went into the packing sheds and inspected the strawberries. They also looked at the early apricots and fruits. They had to meet certain standards before they could be sold in the stores. If an apple was called a Rome Beauty, it had to be a Rome Beauty. You couldn't substitute a Bellflower for it. This meant a great deal to the consumers in the state of California. And other states followed California's standards.

LHH: Another service was the bonding and licensing of warehouses. For instance, the grain is all in now in California, by fall. It's been in for a month anyway. The State inspectors are very alert and they look at the grain that these warehouses have stored in them. The warehouses have to meet certain standards before they can sell their seeds to the farmer. The inspectors test a sampling of the grain. Then the warehouse man sells that grain according to what standard it is and for what purpose it is to be used. The poor grades are sold for cattle feed, but it has to be used for that and for that alone.

That is the only fair way to do anything. The warehouseman wants to make his money. The farmer wants to make his money. And the man who buys the seed wants to make his money. The man who buys the seed should get what he pays for, and the farmer should get paid for how well he produces his crops. The man who is careful and takes good care of his crops has a right to get top prices. We all believe that.

SW: Was it your father who started up the Plant Pathology Lab in Sacramento?

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*For a complete description of the activities of the Department of Agriculture, see Annual Report of the California Department of Agriculture, beginning in 1919-1920.

LHH: Yes. Of course, he didn't think all these things up. He had the ideas from Davis, from Berkeley and from all around in agriculture. But he combined all of these ideas, and he got the money from the Legislature to run it, with the help of many, many other people.

That State Plant Pathology Lab is one of the greatest things they did for California. It is a great help to farmers.

For instance, we are raising some peppers out here on the ranch for market. There's something infesting them. I can't tell what it is. And the County Agricultural Commissioner and the Farm Advisor say, "I've never seen that pest before. What is it?" So they call in a man from the State Plant Pathology Lab. He doesn't recognize it. It's something strange or they would all know. They run it through a laboratory test there, and they discover the trouble.

Or, here's another example of the kind of help the Lab can give: A lot of people around here are raising tomatoes. The farmer doesn't buy his own tomato seeds now. All the big canneries, like Contadina or Hunt's, furnish the tomato seed so they know what kind of tomatoes they're getting. You contract with the cannery before you plant. If you say, "I want to plant 100 acres." They say, "All right, we'll give you 100 acres." Then you can get the kind of seeds they recommend.

One year we got seed from Hunt's, I believe it was. We planted it, and this land comes in fairly early. When the tomatoes came in, they were these long, narrow tomatoes, and round tomatoes, and little green ones, hard ones, and they were a mess! Well, we asked for the County Agricultural Commissioner to come out and look, and he said, "You've got a mess of seeds. Do you have any samples of your seeds left?" Well, fortunately, we had some sacks. The man planting the seed had been rather careless, and he didn't get the sacks completely empty. So we got all the samples together and took them over to Sacramento to the Lab. They said, "You have gotten the sweepings of the floors in the warehouses. They've sent you this by mistake." Some man cleaning up the warehouse picked up all this seed and threw it in with the good seed. We contacted the cannery. "Oh, no, we didn't do anything like that! You've gotten some other seeds in there."

So we had a representative from the cannery, and we had the State man and we had the County man, and my husband Charles was out there. We showed them the sack and showed them the seeds. The proof. Everything was right there.

It was too late to plant again because the tomatoes were all ripening, so the cannery finally said, "All right, we'll accept everything you've got. We'll just put it into tomato sauce instead of trying to can any of it."

But you see what the seed Lab did. If we hadn't had the State to verify this, we probably would have lost forty to sixty acres of tomatoes, which meant a great deal to us.

SW: One of the other services was weed and rodent control. What is the relationship between the State and the county operations?

LHH: The county works under the County Agricultural Commissioner, who works under the State Department of Agriculture. The State sets the standards and they are carried out by the county.

Here in Yolo County Herb Chandler, the present County Agricultural Commissioner, has a rig that goes up and down and sprays the county roads, keeping down the weeds. His men also put out poison for the gophers and for the rats. The farmers can go and get rat poison from them, the best that they know of at the time that won't do any damage to anybody or anything.

SW: So, what your father did was to set up statewide rules and regulations that were the same for all the counties?

LLH: Yes.

SW: Before that, there wasn't weed control on a regular, statewide basis?

LHH: No. In those days the farmers would say, "Now look! I've raised a crop of grain, but there are weeds all up and down out on the roadside. The north wind and the south wind have blown them all in, and my land is infected with weeds, and I can't do a thing about it." Now the roads are all sprayed and the weeds kept down.

LHH: Another service was the supervision of the livestock industry. That was the grading of cattle and the handling of diseases. The hoof and mouth disease came into that. There are a lot of cattle diseases. I don't know too much about them. We've had very few here on the ranch.

The supervision worked the same way as it did with the seed. The inspector from the State Department came out and looked at the cows. If your cows had something, they could tell what it was. If the disease was very serious, the farm was quarantined until it was cleared up.

Then there was milk and dairy inspection. At one time milk was judged by its richness, its fat content, because the farmers sent their milk to the creamery to make into butter. Sometimes the farmers would hold their cream too long before they delivered it. I remember when we used to put our cans of cream right here by the side of the road, and the creamery man came by and picked them up. If they were late picking them up in the hot part of the day, or if some of the cream in there was pretty old, it turned sour due to a bacterial count. Then the butter would not be as pure as it should have been. They had to have standardization for that, so butter inspection was another section that was in the Department.

As margarine came in -- and that was the thing that the farmers all demanded of Dad's department -- they set standards for margarine. It was uncolored at first. The farmers didn't want margarine to be in competition with their butter. And you can't blame them.

But in time methods changed. The cream reached the creamery much sooner, and the butter was better. Then margarine was allowed to be colored. That took a lot of the farmers' profit. Now the Jersey and the Guernsey cows that gave the richer milk are not as popular as the Holsteins that give the most milk, because people are very conscious of the low-fat milk.

SW: Are Holsteins the standard dairy cow now?

LHH: Pretty much. But it depends also on where the dairies are. Along the coast, where there are lots of dairies, some breeds of cows do better than others. They have to raise the kind that does the best in their territory. Right here in the valley they always have the Holsteins.

SW: Doesn't the State also inspect meat and slaughterhouses?

LHH: Yes, they inspect the slaughterhouses for sanitary conditions. And they grade the meat. It used to be that some meat was sent to the market that was tough and old and stringy and should have gone into, well, dogfood. Now when the cows are slaughtered there is a State inspector or a County inspector who comes in. Every carcass is examined and stamped A, B, or C quality.

SW: And these inspections were incorporated into the responsibilities of the State Department?

LHH: Right. It was started in 1921 to cover meats and meat products moving within our state. All interstate shipments were covered by federal meat inspection. Our state operation was equal to or better than the federal inspection.

SW: Was your father the one who set up the inspection stations at the state borders?

LHH: Yes. I can tell you one little interesting story about that. There was a Mr. Whitten who was the president of a very large bank in Los Angeles. He drove east with his family for his vacation. When he returned and came to the inspection station at the California line, they wanted to examine his luggage and camp gear. He said, "You don't need to do that because I don't have anything. I approve of all these laws. I live in Los Angeles. I'm a banker, and I loan money to farmers who have grain. I wouldn't bring any alfalfa weevil into California." The inspectors never paid him any mind. They just went ahead, and when they got through they found eleven weevils in his blankets. He was absolutely amazed! He knew more than ever then the value of the inspections.

When he got back home, he phoned my dad personally and told him how wonderful his men were and how pleased he was about the inspection.

Now regulations are so much stricter in all the states that they have very, very little trouble. Just certain fruits are restricted from coming in because of some of the diseases they might bring. For instance, when you come in from Hawaii you can bring in coconuts and pineapple. But you can't bring in apples and some of the soft fruits that harbor the Mediterranean fruit fly, because they have it in the Islands. They haven't been able completely to eradicate it. That was one of the big, big things they had to fight in Dad's day. It's getting so scarce in so many of the countries now that you don't hear much about it anymore, but it's just as dangerous. It has gotten into California once or twice and it's been found in Florida, but eradicated. It was important to fight it because fruit is so important in California agriculture. The Mediterranean fruit fly would have meant the complete destruction of the fruit industry.

SW: What does the Mediterranean fruit fly do?

LHH: It stings the fruit, lays its eggs, and when you bite into the fruit, it's full of maggots. And the fruit is totally useless. And it multiplies just bingo, bingo, bingo, right over night. One female will lay thousands of eggs before she dies. A few female flies could just ruin an entire crop. So they have been very, very careful to watch for the fly and get it. Once in a while somebody will bring some fruit in and hide it, and they'll bring in the flies. But we have pretty close inspections now, and they catch the flies quickly. Most counties raising susceptible fruits have insect traps pretty well scattered throughout their orchard areas.

Formation of Western Plant Quarantine Board

When George Hecke was State Commissioner of Horticulture, he presided over the First Insterstate Plant Quarantine Conference which was held in Riverside, California, May 26-31, 1919. In his address of welcome, Mr. Hecke said:

> It gives me great pleasure to preside at the opening session of this Interstate Plant Quarantine Conference, for I feel that here in Riverside during the next few days we are going to lay a firm foundation upon which to build in the future a fabric of horticultural quarantines that shall be safe, sane and practical and devoted to the better protection of the plant industries of the West. . . .
>
> Many states have come to realize the necessity of protecting their plant industries by preventing the introduction of plant pests which would be liable to increase within their borders the cost of crop production, and we find that horticultural quarantines are coming into practical use in a great many states of the union. . . .
>
> The western states represented here today have many interests in common. Throughout the territory which we have the honor to represent, the industries of horticulture and agriculture are coming rapidly to the front. Starting in as we have done with areas clean of many of the most injurious pests, there is the greatest incentive to use every possible means to retain this advantage over our neighbors. Bounded as we are on the east and the south by the Rocky Mountains and the great desert, on the west by the Pacific Ocean, and on the north by the great snows, the eleven western states, together with our neighbors, British Columbia, on the north, and Lower California, on the south, occupy a position peculiarly fortunate with reference to the natural distribution of plant pests. The territory of Hawaii, because of its geographical situation, enjoys a similar advantage. It seems logical that we should endeavor within the territories thus protected from invasion by natural means to add to nature's barricades the manmade plant quarantines to prevent the introduction of these pests when carried by human agencies. Plant quarantines of one kind or another are already in effect in every state within this territory. The enforcement of these regulations is in the hands of experienced men. . . . It but remains, therefore, to bring about the maximum protection for this territory, for these men to come together to learn each the problems of the other, and to form a working agreement which shall enable us to carry out the principles of plant quarantines for our individual as well as for our collective protection.

California State Department of Agriculture. The Monthly Bulletin. Vol. VIII, No. 8, August 1919, pp. 437-438.

The delegates of the First Interstate Plant Quarantine Conference met in the Mission Inn, Riverside, California, from May 26-27, 1919. Left to right: A.L. Strausz (Montana); George M. List (Colorado), A.L. Kimball (Arizona), H.R. Hagan (Utah), the Secretary; Leila Hecke, the Mascot; E.M. Ehrhorn (Hawaii); G.H. Hecke, the Chairman; W.H. Lyne (British Columbia); Charles A. Park (Oregon); Frederick Maskew (California); W.H. Wicks (Idaho); M.L. Dean (Washington).

On May 28, 1919, the Western Plant Quarantine Board was created. Here is the preamble to the Constitution and By-laws:

> We, the plant quarantine officials of the Western States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming and the Territory of Hawaii, District of Lower California and the Province of British Columbia, here assembled in the First Western Plant Quarantine Conference at Riverside, California, May 26 to 31, 1919, for the purpose of discussing quarantine questions, pertaining to promulgating and enforcing our various regulations, believing that uniformity of action is conducive to better results in our work deem it advisable to form an organization for our mutual co-operation and understanding. . . .

IBID, p. 493

SW: Leila, will you tell me what you recall about the formation of the Western Plant Quarantine Board?

LHH: I'm not sure what year (1919), but Dad gained the cooperation of the Federal Horticultural Board in calling a meeting at Riverside, California, to form a Plant Quarantine Board for the eleven Western States, Hawaii, Alaska, British Columbia and Mexico. Their state representatives met once a year. All their quarantine laws regulating the importation of plants and plant products were essentially uniform, so if California, for example, had developed any new plant pest or disease, all the other western states would establish uniform quarantine regulations.

Plant quarantine was very important to California because we were on the coast. Plants came in from other countries to our country through California ports, and they could bring in insect pests or plant diseases we didn't have. If California had been a cold, rocky, wet or dry land, it wouldn't have made any difference, but they came into a land where agriculture flourished.

SW: How did the Western Plant Quarantine Board work?

LHH: Each state had an Agricultural Commissioner or Horticultural man. They had different titles, but they were all the same as Agricultural Commissioners of these eleven western states. Each state would take a turn being the president. Another would be the secretary. And they kept in touch with each other. "Here, we've got a bad trouble. What about it?" Or someone else would say, "We're having troubles with apples. Be careful of our apples coming in." They'd advise each other.

They met once a year. I used to travel with my dad to the meetings. I remember one was in Riverside, California, and another was in Victoria, British Columbia. I also went to Utah and to Arizona with him.

SW: Would the annual meeting take a couple of days?

LHH: Yes, two or three days. I guess if the president knew something had occurred, or if there was something of interest for them, then one of those men would come up and read a paper or bring up something they wanted for discussion. Or sometimes they needed to change a law to make it stronger or weaker, or make a policy or something of the sort.

SW: If they decided to change a law, then would they have to go back to their own state government and push it through their own legislature?

LHH: Yes. Then it would be adopted in the laws of eleven western states. They couldn't affect the laws in the rest of the states, just in their own group. But, through a combined general law, it would affect them all.

And they were wonderful, wonderful men. My goodness, Mr. Park from Oregon was one of the finest men you'd ever want to know. He was very old, but he knew what he was doing. There was a very fine man from Utah, I can't remember his name. (Harold R. Hagan)

SW: They must have been very effective.

LHH: They were effective. They realized the importance of the Board. They realized that the life blood of their agriculture meant cooperation and not fighting. And they were all for it.

I suppose they have the Board now. I don't know. You don't hear anything about it when you're out of the picture.

SW: I would think that this was a great thing for your father to have gotten started. It must have been his vision and leadership that got them going.

LHH: Yes, it was. It was his leadership, and then he knew several of the others. He made it a point to know these men and to see if they agreed. They said, "The best thing for us all is to get together."

I believe the Board started in Riverside, California, at the Mission Inn. I remember being there, in the Mission Inn. I was very much impressed with the room that was given my father because it was the room the U.S. presidents always had when they came. But, of course, I was much more interested in the garden than anything else.

SW: Mr. Jacobsen, can you tell me about the formation of the Western Plant Quarantine Board?

WCJ: It was back during the second year that I was employed in the Office of the State Horticultural Commissioner. The principle of plant quarantine, keeping out infested or infected plants or plant products from any other state or from any foreign country, was uppermost in the minds of these gentlemen who were enforcing the agricultural statutes that pertained to agricultural pests. Hecke made arrangements with the Federal Horticultural Board, which then was the national enforcing agency on plant quarantine inspection, whereby the men in his department along with the County Horticultural Commissioners would carry on very intensive inspections on any plant product that came from any foreign source. He also arranged that the head man in plant quarantine and the port inspector be appointed collaborators of the Federal Horticultural Board and receive a minor compensation, I think $25, from the Federal Horticultural Board to go along with the authority that they were granted.

So now Dr. Hecke, as I say, was quite an organizer. In 1919 he organized the Western Plant Quarantine Board, if you please. On this board were representatives from the eleven western states, Alaska, Hawaii, British Columbia, and even

a representative from the Republic of Mexico. That meant that instead of having a lot of arguments by correspondence and over the telephone, they could sit down and discuss the problems about keeping California and each of these states free of the pests that could be transported by mail, by express, by freight, by whatever transportation means were available. Of course, that was before the days of airplanes so there wasn't anything that was being transported by air.

SW: And this Plant Quarantine Board was pretty much his idea?

WCJ: Oh, definitely. Without question. I can remember when I first went to work for the State, they were having considerable arguments about alfalfa weevil that might come in from Utah or Nevada, or nematodes that would infest potatoes in Idaho or Utah or Colorado. And a lot of bitterness developed between some of the states. Hecke could see that if you'd just sit down and talk the thing over and have an understanding as to the whys and wherefores of proper plant quarantine enforcement, a lot of these things could be settled very easily. And so he arranged for annual meetings.

Our top plant quarantine man, named Lee Strong, was overseas in World War I when I signed on with Mr. Hecke. He was elevated to Chief, Bureau of Plant Quarantine and Pest Control when Prof. Harry Smith went over to the University Station at Riverside. Strong shortly thereafter in 1923 took over a top position with the Federal Horticultural Board. Mr. Hecke said to me, "Well, it looks like we have an organization here, the Bureau of Plant Quarantine and Pest Control, and Lee Strong is going to the Federal Horticultural Board. I'm putting the bee on you to not only take over that Bureau but also become Secretary of the Western Plant Quarantine Board. So I did both, and we got things pretty well straightened out.

We arranged to have the first five proceedings of the Western Plant Quarantine Board bound together in one printed volume, so we have a valuable reference source.

Governor's Agricultural Council

LHH: I know that in the early years of the Department, Dad had a hard time with his budget. The Governor and his advisors got his budget down to a small amount, and he had to go and fight for the Department's life.

I think a lot of the Bureaus were still against the combined Department. They still wanted their little individual departments, you know. But Dad wouldn't have it. He was going to resign if they wouldn't do it right. If it wasn't done well, he wasn't going to have anything else. I've forgotten what it was now, but somebody said, "Maybe you'd better resign." But he stayed on and won that battle.

And Mr. James Mills says, in his "Report of the Activities of the Governor's Council," "Little did they know that his resignation was in his pocket if he needed it."

SW: When did that happen?

LHH: This was around 1923. This kind of thing made Dad feel that it was very important to have plenty of farmers represented on a council that could explain to

Governor Richardson the agricultural picture. He asked the Governor if he would appoint a committee of his own friends, farmers, men whom he could trust and whose advice he could follow. After a week's consultation, Mr. A.C. Hardison of Santa Paula was appointed. He was the president of the California Farm Bureau Federation. Then he appointed Mr. A.T. Spencer, who was head of the State Reclamation Board and a sheep man. He appointed Carrol Rodgers, an apple grower from Watsonville, Judge Peter J. Shields, who was a judge in Sacramento, closely connected with the University at Davis, and James Mills of Hamilton City, a man who was interested in many things in agriculture all over the state of California. Mr. Mills was a Regent of the University and he also had holdings in citrus fruits in Glenn County in the northern part of the state. These men would discuss with Dad any of the important things that would come up. They would make a plan, take the plan to the Governor and meet with him. And the Governor knew that this was well worked out, it was what the farmers of California wanted, and without any hesitation, he backed it.

SW: So, these men represented certain aspects of agriculture?

LHH: Yes, they did, all different facets of agriculture. They were from all up and down in the state and they represented the main agricultural producers and marketers. They were not employed by the Department. They only got their expenses and per diem.

Here's something interesting. It's a copy of an editorial that was written by John Pickett, editor of the Pacific Rural Press, which is one of the main agricultural magazines, the most important one at that time. It starts out by saying, "When George Hecke started after something for the Department of Agriculture, he was reminded of a bull calf and a bucket of milk. Drag the calf away from one approach and he makes another. The calf's idea seeming to be that persistence and a hard head will eventually win the milk. Several years ago," he said, when Dad wanted to have this Agricultural Council, "The Rural Press thought it was going to be too political." Then he said, "We want to congratulate Mr. Hecke for tending the fruits of persistence. We want to keep the record straight by saying we still doubt that this plan will be the thing George anticipates." But Dad said he wanted to have this thing as a board between himself and the politicians. He wanted to keep politics out of the Department. That was the reason for this advisory board. Anyway, Mr. Pickett said, "Creating a buffer board which was to stand between the politicians and the Director of Agriculture is somewhat akin to putting a shingle in the pants of the school boy. Even if he does get licked, it will still not hurt too much."

Whether this applies to the teacher or Dad or someone else, the administrator that administers the heavy hand does not hurt too much. They called the Council or the proposed State Board of Agriculture "a shingle for Hecke's pants."

SW: Mr. Jacobsen, a while back when you were talking about Dr. Hecke's organizing the State Department of Agriculture, you said that he felt that agriculture throughout the state needed better organization within itself. You mentioned the various farm organizations and regulatory agencies, and how they all had representatives appearing before the Legislature. What about the cooperative organizations?

WCJ: The agricultural coops joined to form the Agricultural Legislative Committee. Hecke's top staff member, a man by the name of Ralph Taylor, became the first Executive Secretary of the Agricultural Legislative Committee.

SW: Was this a group to talk to the Legislature?

WCJ: By all means, yes! And while they represented the coops mainly, through this Agricultural Legislative Committee they were keenly aware of the viewpoints of the other farm organizations as well.

Hecke was very active in supporting the creation of this Agricultural Legislative Committee, which later has been called the Agricultural Council of California. Hecke was getting agriculture more or less united, you see.

SW: Would you tell me about the Agricultural Society? Was it totally separate from the Department of Agriculture?

WCJ: Oh, entirely separate. Its primary responsibility was the State Fair. Never at any time that I recall did Mr. Hecke have any idea that the State Department of Agriculture at some time or other would also manage the State Fair.

Now, it wasn't unusual for the chairman or the president of the State Agricultural Society to be very active with what later became the State Board of Agriculture. And there was confusion in the very beginning. It wasn't until, I think it was the 1929 Legislature that finally got the State Agricultural Society and the State Board of Agriculture and the Director of the State Department of Agriculture clarified in such a way that everybody understood it.

The original State Board of Agriculture was a sort of semi-statistical organization. It took a little time to get that worked out. The statistical work which was operated in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture became very important. That work was headquartered for a while in San Francisco. Then Dr. Hecke worked out the cooperative arrangement with the proper agency in Washington, D.C. and they (USDA) financed a sizeable portion of the California Crop and Livestock Reporting Service and later on the Cooperative Market News Service. Both these services were very important in agricultural statistical information.

They had some terrifically remarkable people on some of the early State Boards of Agriculture. They were truly representative people. I remember the first nine members of the board. One of them was supposed to be the secretary. Of course, he was a farmer or represented a farm organization or a farm coop or something of that sort, and so they created an Assistant Secretary of the State Board of Agriculture. The Assistant Secretary was one of the staff members of the State Department of Agriculture. I served in that capacity, among others, for a good many years.

SW: I understand that the creation of the Board of Agriculture as an appointed board was a very political issue at the time. Do you remember what the problems were?

WCJ: Well, the editor of the Pacific Rural Press kind of thought that the Director of Agriculture should stand on his own. I am not aware of any particular or critical problem being involved at the time.

As a matter of fact, Hecke visualized this as a responsibility of his. There might be a Governor at some time that could very well ignore the importance of some of the responsibilities of the State Department of Agriculture. Or there might be a Governor who might not particularly care for what the Director of Agriculture might propose. But, if it was a valid and noteworthy problem, the Governor couldn't ignore what nine representatives of the respective branches of the agricultural industry were saying.

In other words, Hecke really wasn't quite that minded, that he was looking for protection from a board. He wanted agricultural representation that the Governor would understand was truly representative of the agricultural industry.

Unexpectedly the Board did prove to be helpful in connection with the removal of Dudley Moulton as Director of Agriculture in 1933 and the recommendation to the Governor that A.A. Brock be appointed to fill the vacancy. Mr. Hecke viewed these actions as proving the value and importance of the State Board of Agriculture.

The Epizootic of Foot and Mouth Disease*

(*Commonly referred to as the Hoof and Mouth Epidemic)

On February 17, 1924, California agriculture was seriously threatened when evidence of foot and mouth disease was found in Alameda County. Almost immediately a full-scale war against the disease was waged by George Hecke, the Department of Agriculture, the University of California, member states of the Western Plant Quarantine Board and agencies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As a result of quick and effective action, this outbreak of foot and mouth disease did not spread beyond the California state line, and California's livestock industry was saved from ruin.

The epidemic was declared officially over on June 10, 1926, one year after the last case was discovered. By the time it was over, 109,855 agricultural animals, valued at $4,350.008.16, had been slaughtered, and 22,214 deer had been killed. The campaign to eradicate hoof and mouth disease in California cost $6,151,382.75.

Dr. Charles Keane of the Department of Agriculture, in his official report to Governor Richardson about the epizootic, says:

> It is generally accepted as a fact that few, if any, unfortunate events in the history of California have exerted such a detrimental influence on the commerce of the state as a whole, for a short time at least, as did this outbreak of foot and mouth disease. To the direct losses due to the disease itself, including expenditures for control and indemnification, must be added the indirect losses on account of interference with business by embargoes and restrictions imposed within this state and by other states and foreign countries. Unfortunately many of these. . . restrictions. . . were, in the opinion of livestock sanitary experts of wide experience, unnecessary and unjustifiable. They were brought about in most instances by a hysterical fear that seemed to sweep like a wave not only over many western and some eastern states, but throughout California as well. California was, therefore, suddenly awakened from its sense of security in February, 1924, and its agricultural and other business interests were made to realize how closely the general economic welfare of the state is dependent upon, and interwoven with, the work of the regulatory forces in the control and eradication of plant and animal diseases. . . .
>
> The Director of Agriculture quickly realized that this was no ordinary situation and that the field forces must be supplied with the necessary funds, public cooperation and other details too numerous to mention here. Accordingly all work in the State Department of Agriculture was subordinated to foot and mouth disease control, and every division and bureau was drafted for assistance in this work. . . .
>
> That the epizootic was brought under control within a few months after its discovery, and finally eradicated in the face of such unusual conditions is a feat that stands without parallel in the history of livestock sanitation.

Charles Keane, Associate Chief, Division of Animal Industry. in California Department of Agriculture, The Epizootic of Foot and Mouth Disease. Special Publication No. 65, June 15, 1926, pp. 6-8.

J.E. Huntoon, Cashier of the People's Bank in Sacramento, hands George Hecke a check for $250,000 for the Foot and Mouth Disease Eradication Campaign, April 24,1924.

SW: Mr. Jacobsen, we were talking about Dr. Hecke. Didn't he sometimes act as an individual first and then get permission later? I was thinking of what I had read about the epidemic of foot and mouth disease in the early twenties. Didn't he go and get money on the basis of his own personal word at the bank until such time as the Legislature could appropriate the money?

WCJ: Well, that was true in the first outbreak we had of foot and mouth disease. He was very cognizant of how important early action was in the case of an outbreak such as the foot and mouth disease.

SW: Leila, I ran across a quote I wanted to ask you about. When your father was Director of the Department of Agriculture he said that he wanted "every basic agricultural law to be enforced by the Department to be tested and tried in the courts."

LHH: Yes. He proposed a lot of laws that the Agricultural Commissioners and the farmers wanted, if it came to a test, the courts to be able to prove that the laws were right.

I remember when he went to the Legislature and asked for $250,000 to stamp out hoof and mouth disease, they gave him free rein. By that time they knew he was a taskmaster, but he was as honest as the day was long. He thought the farmer was the most important person in the world. He stuck up for the farmers and worked for agriculture in the state of California.

SW: Was it true that before the Legislature appropriated the money, your father came up with the money to get started fighting the disease on his own?

LHH: Yes. He pledged the ranch as security. He knew that the legislators knew the seriousness of the situation. He felt confident that they would come up with the money. And they did.

SW: Wouldn't you consider that quite unusual, for a state official to put up his own property as collateral?

LHH: You don't do that in this day and age. But that epidemic was a very serious thing. If you had seen the pictures Dad showed us. I never went too close to the animals themselves because you were never allowed to. Those were the days where every place you went, you had to step in a disinfectant before you went from one county to another. It was really pretty tough through that time.

The poor animals would get it down in the hooves, and it would hurt, and they would lick it, and then they'd get it in their mouths. And their mouths would just drool, just drool all the time. They couldn't walk and they couldn't eat.

SW: Is the disease caused by a fungus?

LHH: It's a virus.

SW: Do you know where it came from?

LHH: Yes. Some farmers down in Benicia bought garbage from ships that came into the Bay from the Orient. They had animals on shipboard and they killed them for food. They saved the garbage and brought it to shore and sold it. And a farmer bought it for his pigs.

They first found it in Benicia, and soon other parts of the state had gotten exposed to it. All the other states were quarantined against anything from California. The California farmer was just ruined, absolutely ruined. He couldn't sell anything out of state.

The Department knew the seriousness of the situation. Something had to be done. They took drastic measures. It had to be a drastic thing or they never could have controlled it. Thousands and thousands of cattle had to be killed because they had been exposed to the disease. Really, shooting was a blessing for them when they got good sharpshooters and they killed them instantly. They put them out of their misery.

They dug trenches as long as a quarter of a mile with big, big, big bulldozers. The cattle were brought there and shot, and put in the trenches and covered up and buried. They quarantined the property where they were. They sprayed it and they disinfected it.

I knew Tilly Alcartra, the world famous cow that gave more milk than any cow in the world at that time. She lived here in Yolo County and took prizes wherever she went. There were pictures of her everywhere. A.W. Morris, a very good friend of ours, owned her. She had to be shot. Dad was criticized around here for that more than for anything else I ever knew. He had her killed because she was exposed to hoof and mouth disease. This was a great worry to him. But why should she be saved any more than any other ordinary cow who's bringing the disease in with her? That's logical, but it was awfully hard to take.

And then, the awful part of it was that some way it actually got into the deer in California. And that was a problem. They had to have men out there killing deer. They put out poisoned salt licks. Dad, to his dying day, worried about that.

SW: This must have been a major financial calamity for the ranchers.

LHH: Oh yes, it was a terrible thing. Also for the hunters.

SW: Did it affect any other animals?

LHH: All cloven hoofed animals. Sheep and hogs and cattle. Not horses; they were not affected.

Hecke Resigns

SW: Mr. Jacobsen, one last thing I'd like to ask you about. When Mr. Hecke resigned from his job, he said that he was very proud to have served under four Governors. At the time of his resignation there was a new Governor coming in. Was this part of the reason that he resigned when he did?

WCJ: Yes, very definitely. He had seen transitions before, and there was a County Horticultural Commissioner in San Francisco by the name of Moulton. He had rather poisoned the mind of Mayor James Rolph, who was to become Governor, against Hecke because Hecke had curtailed some of Moulton's questionable activities.

In other words, Moulton was issuing certificates stating that a shipment was up to a required standard or that nursery stock was pest-free or something of the sort. And Moulton had no hesitancy in handing out some of the certificates to people that he apparently trusted. He would collect 50¢ for each certificate. Well, he had no right as State Plant Quarantine guardian making a charge for that in San Francisco. None of the other counties did. That was part of their job and responsibility. I became the hatchet man in going down to San Francisco and stopping Moulton doing that kind of business. And, of course, that made me a mortal enemy of Moulton. He thought I was interested in being Hecke's successor. I wasn't interested in being Hecke's successor. I had plenty to do without that.

Hecke had seen new Governors come in and had seen what happened to some of the department heads where politics was primarily involved. I'll say this for Hecke, he didn't instill any political ideas into the minds of any of his staff. He paid no attention to politics. He said, "It's your responsibility to do the work the way the law requires, and no favors to anybody." And that was a very good standard to be guided by.

I can remember that I was invited over to a friend's home to meet Rolph the night before his inauguration as Governor. He said, "Well, you know, I was looking forward to the time when one of the first things I was going to do was to can that guy (Hecke). But," he said, "he's cheated me out of it. He's sent me a letter of resignation." And I said, "Well, Hecke was just playing safe. He was giving you freedom of choice. He has seen other Governors come in and they've made changes, so he didn't want to make you feel that he was insistent upon being continued."

I was Acting Director of the Department for three or four months while the Governor was making up his mind whether he was going to appoint Moulton or not.

IV. ELIZABETH WELCH HECKE

Elizabeth Welch Hecke was born in Yolo County in 1867. Her parents, Jesse and Martha Browning Welch, were pioneers who had come to California from Kentucky in the 1850's. She graduated from Woodland district schools and attended Hesperian College in Woodland and San Jose Normal. In 1897 she married George H. Hecke and spent the rest of her life on the Yolanda Ranch.

Elizabeth Hecke's life was a full one. She was first and foremost a homemaker, the wife who provided support for her brilliant and energetic husband and the loving mother of two active daughters. She was the capable manager of a large farm household. She was a willing community worker and an active club woman. When she died in 1939, at the age of 72, an editorial in the Woodland Democrat said of her:

> Mrs. Hecke gave spark and spirit to the community's business and social life, and as an enthusiastic student and observer of agricultural affairs she was a worthy partner of her sturdy husband who has consecrated his life to the welfare of the farmer. . . .
>
> Mrs. Hecke lies down to her deserved rest with the definite knowledge that her life counted. "She hath done what she could."

Daughter of A Pioneer Family

SW: Leila, would you tell me about your mother's family?

LHH: My mother comes from the big family of Brownings that settled around here in Yolo County. The early forty-niners, they all came from Kentucky. There were the Brownings, the Lawsons, the Laugenours, the Hustons, the Days and the Stephens. Those were the early big families around here. They took up 80, 150, 200 acres, whatever they wanted, to homestead.

They would stake the land, plow, and cultivate a little bit in the fall. They didn't have the weeds we do now. A wagon went through with sacks of grain. Two men would stand on the back and throw the grain out over the land. They knew how much of a swath they could take by the way a man could throw.

Then they didn't have anything to do before they harvested the grain in June or July. They'd all gather in each other's homes. They'd take the threshing machines where they worked. The women of these families would gather and

The Hecke family poses for a picture in the garden at Yolanda in 1920. Pictured, from left to right, are George, Martha, Leila and Elizabeth Hecke and Marion Hunt.

they'd cook. They'd feed all the gang three good meals a day. When they finished one man's land, they went to the next fellow's and they'd do the same thing there. When harvesting was over, they didn't have anything to do until it was time to plant the seed again.

In the earliest days, the harvesting methods were so poor that they lost a lot of the grain, so many of the farmers summer fallowed, which meant that they didn't have to do anything.

They made good money in those days. They built beautiful homes. Some of the lovely homes right around here date from those early pioneers. Then a lot of them got the gold fever, and they had to go to the mines to see if they could make their fortunes. My grandfather was one of those. He came home sadder and poorer, but he had his fun.

The Story of Jesse James

My grandfather, Jesse Welch, had a dairy farm, eighty acres, just a few miles from here on Gibson Road and Road 97. His home was surrounded by a white picket fence, and outside that was a watering trough. All the people that used the dusty county roads were privileged to come and water their horses at that watering trough. They didn't plant pastures like we do today and they didn't have fences. They would drive their cattle from ranch to ranch to eat off the grain and the fodder that was left.

One of the interesting people that stopped by that watering trough was Jesse James. He talked to my grandfather about his last raid over in the Sierras of some of the stagecoaches. Then he'd scoot up to Capay Valley up in the hills there and stay until things were safe. They always had a lookout and they could watch the roads from above. If the "watch" saw a lot of dust coming, he knew the posses were after them. So Jesse and his gang would go deeper into the hills and hide out up there until the danger of being caught was over. When all was clear, they'd come out again, go back to the Sierras to repeat what they had done. He was one of the very famous, early day train robbers.

Mother's Early Life

SW: Was your mother born and brought up on that dairy ranch?

LHH: Yes. She had two brothers and two sisters. They all died in infancy except this one brother (Alfred B. Welch).

SW: Did she go to school in Woodland?

LHH: Yes, she went to the Fillmore School in the country and to Hesperian College in Woodland. Then she went to San Jose Normal and became a teacher. She came back to Woodland after college and taught school somewhere up near Madison.

SW: Was she teaching when she met your father?

LHH: Yes. She came out to the ranch to cut fruit to make a little extra money during summer vacation.

SW: After she and your father were married, did she continue to teach school?

Life in the Country

LHH: No. She had a lot of work here. She kept this whole house herself. She managed the kitchen and did a lot of buying for the kitchen. She did all of that herself until I graduated from college, and then I took over the buying for the kitchen and the planning of the meals. As best we could! Some cooks you helped a lot; others didn't need your help; and some didn't want it.

We had, as Mr. Jackson did, a vegetable garden here to supply some of our vegetables. We had a dairy, we had chickens, and we raised hogs and sheep. Our ranch was as near self-supporting as a ranch could be. We did have to buy flour, salt, rice, beans, all bought in 100-pound sacks.

Did I tell you about the Chinaman from Hell's Half Acre? He used to come twice a week during vegetable season and Mother would buy what she would need from him. On the post out there (in back of the house) they'd write down how much she'd bought that day from him. When he wanted some money, or when the figures got to be a pretty long list, well then, Mother would add it up. She'd give him a check and then they'd paint the post over and start in again. I remember he always gave us a handful of raw peanuts. Mother was always cooking them in the oven for us, and they were always getting burned because of too hot a fire.

SW: Sounds as if your mother was kept very busy.

LHH: Yes, very busy. She did the buying and she canned a lot. She used to can even more than I did. She had an old kerosene stove that she used outside. She canned apricots and peaches. And we had apple trees, oh, four or five of them, and they had awfully good apples. They were a little eastern green apple, but they were good, and we'd can jars and jars of them. Jars and jars of everything --apricots, tomatoes, peaches, pears. Then Mother made preserves and jellies and goodies, things like that for the kitchen.

SW: Your mother was always thinking of the fifty to sixty people she had to feed, wasn't she?

LHH: Oh yes.

And she did all the laundry for a long, long time. But eventually, I remember when they burned the mortgage on the ranch, Mother said, "One thing I want. And that is that I would like to have somebody do the laundry for me." We didn't have washing machines in those days. Mother had big galvanized round tubs that she had out back. They had to heat the water on the stove in the kitchen and carry the kettles from the kitchen out there and pour it into the tubs. They washed everything by washboard. Then the laundry had to be rinsed and rinsed and rinsed and hung out on the line. It was an awful job.

Of course, she didn't have to do the laundry for the men. She did do one thing, though. She had roller towels for the men. We didn't have paper towels in those days, of course. She always boiled those towels in lye water so they'd be sterile.

She always made all the soap from the fat that was left from beef and from pork.

When Mother was finally able to get somebody to do the laundry, it was a colored gal who lived only a block from a friend of ours in Woodland. My sister and I would take our pony cart into town to school. The laundry lady would take the pony and come back to the ranch. She'd get here about 9:30 or quarter to ten, I'd imagine. She helped Mother all day with the laundry, and then in the afternoon when she was through, she'd take the pony back. And my sister and I'd take it and come on home after school.

SW: Do you remember when your mother got a washing machine?

LHH: Oh, yes, that was a great excitement. It was an Apex washing machine. It was a big long, oblong tub, made of copper, kind of narrow. That thing just rocked back and forth like a cradle and bounced the clothes in the hot water. Oh, that was just wonderful. You didn't have to scrub them by hand. She thought it was the most wonderful thing that was ever invented. That and our vacuum cleaner were her greatest joys. I was thrilled with the electric stove and refrigerator, but I guess the electric lights were the most wonderful thing we ever had.

SW: Do you remember when the electricity came?

LHH: I must have been in the last years of grammar school or the beginning of high school.

What a blessing it was to have electric light bulbs. Before that we had acetylene lights and candles all through the house.

SW: And I suppose it was somebody's chore to keep the lamps trimmed.

LHH: Yes, every morning the lamps had to be taken down. The chimneys had to be washed and cleaned, and the lamps had to be filled with kerosene. We were always afraid the men were going to knock them over and cause a fire.

SW: The life of an early farmer's wife was one of very hard work, wasn't it?

LHH: Very hard. But I imagine that when people lived in town, they didn't have life much easier. They had gas lights, though, which was one thing they had over us. We couldn't get any gas out here. When they finally went down the highway with the gas line, Dad asked that they come in here. They said, "If you'll pay for the line for it, we'll bring it over." They wanted a dollar a foot, so that was $5,000 in those days. That was a lot of money, so Mama said that we wouldn't bother with that gas. We've never had any gas in here, just electricity and wood-burning fireplaces.

SW: You mentioned being thrilled when you got a refrigerator. What did you do before you had one?

LHH: Before we got the refrigerator we had to buy ice in 100 pounds chunks. Often my sister and I would go to the old brewery there in Woodland. We'd get 100 pounds of ice and put it in a gunny sack and put it in the back of our pony cart. Going home, we'd whip our pony to hurry before that ice melted too far.

We kept meat and things that needed to be cold in that cellar out in the back where it was cool. We bought meat by a whole carcass, in the summer, and in the winter a half a carcass. In between the beef we would kill a sheep or maybe a

couple of hogs. You see, a half a carcass wouldn't last too long. With the men and our family, we had around twenty to feed every day except during the harvest. The men were great meat eaters. That was the thing they liked most of all and we used it up pretty quickly.

SW: Do you remember when you got your first refrigerator?

LHH: I sure do! It was on the Fourth of July. I can't remember the exact year, but it was in the very early thirties. It was a big refrigerator. We still have it out there. It had one side where you could hang a whole beef. In the center were big ice cube trays about two feet long, six of them, full of the little cubes. On the other side we could put in the milk, the meat, the food, anything we needed to keep in there.

I can remember that on this Fourth of July, we couldn't wait for the ice cubes. We'd go in and stick our fingers in the water and see if it wasn't frozen yet. Of course, the things never would freeze. Anyway, that afternoon we had our first iced tea. Oh, it was the most wonderful thing I've ever tasted.

After that the cook in the kitchen would make a big ten gallon enamel pot full of tea, and he'd get two of these big trays of ice cubes. He'd put the whole tray down in the pot and let it melt. And the men had all the iced tea they wanted. In hot weather, how they loved that!

SW: When did your family get their first car?

LHH: Dad had the second automobile in Yolo County. (Byron Jackson had the first, an 1898 Oldsmobile.) It was a little old Oldsmobile, with no top. There wasn't a steering wheel but a steering rod. I remember one night Dad went into town to Masonic meeting. When he came out, someone had tied a gopher snake all around the steering rod!

This automobile had just two seats in the front. There were no doors. You just stepped up into it. And there was what they called a do-si-do in the back, a seat that just backed up into it, and two people could ride there. Of course, you couldn't go fast enough so you didn't fall out of it.

And we had a little cart that my sister and I would ride in. They'd tie that to the back of the car and we'd go around.

When my sister and I were in grammar school, we drove to town in a pony cart. In the wintertime we always had a brick to keep our feet warm In the morning when we'd come down for breakfast, Mother would put a couple of bricks in the firebox of the old kitchen stove. Just as we left the house, she'd take them out and wrap them in an old gunny sack and put them on the floor of our cart. And she'd wrap us all up.

I remember once that the bricks were so hot that they set the gunny sack on fire. We had to pull the robes out and kick the gunny sacks out on the road, bricks and all.

When we got to town we'd take our pony cart to a dear friend of Mother's who had a home in town. He was a dentist. Dad built a little stall in the back of their yard, and we'd put our pony there and feed him a sack of hay. We'd come over after school and hitch him up and go home.

SW: Your mother must have been busy with all the household to manage and you girls too. Did you father do much entertaining at home too?

LHH: Yes. That was after he got into the State Department of Agriculture. By that time things had gotten better. We had electricity on the ranch, and Mother had a girl in the house to help with the work, and we had better cooks in the kitchen. And then Dad entertained a great deal. He liked to. He always did like people and he liked entertaining. We had all the Governors that he served with out here at the house, and some stayed all night.

I'll tell you about one of the earlier Governors. He would stay here very often. Once he was asked to talk in Madison. He was tired after he had had dinner and gone out there and talked. He came right back with Dad to the house, and Mother didn't know he was going to stay all night instead of going back to Sacramento. So he said, "Can I go up to my room?" And Mother said, "Yes." And all of a sudden she remembered that she wasn't sure that she had made the bed up with clean sheets. So she went dashing into the room, and here was the Governor getting stripped down, get into bed. Mother said, "Governor, you go into the closet while I fix up this bed." And he did.

SW: Tell me about the furniture you have upstairs. That is particularly lovely. Would you tell me about how your father got that?

LHH: During the time that Dad was in Sacramento, the Shelley home was torn down. The Shelleys, the Crockers, the Floods and the Stanfords and some of the other early pioneers built big homes. This house was being torn down and Dad was able to buy the two beds and the two bureaus upstairs and the big bookcase in our front room downstairs. The furniture came around the Horn. It's solid walnut, heavy walnut.

SW: Your father bought it in the 1920s?

LHH: Yes, in the late twenties.

SW: You were saying that essentially this house is not very changed from when it was built.

LHH: No. The structure has not been changed at all. The dormitory that the girls had has been cut in half. The front half is a bedroom and the back half is used for storage. There was only one toilet for this entire house, for all the girls and all the guests. It was not until 1932 or '3 that Dad put a bathroom on the back porch. Then, a little bit later, in the early forties, he also put a bathroom in the guestroom upstairs. After Charles and I moved into the home, we put in extra bathrooms, so there are now four. Before that, they just used outhouses around here.

SW: Well, this was an elegant house to have a bathroom at all in those days.

LHH: Yes, we had a beautiful tin tub.

SW: We've heard how busy your mother was as a wife, household manager, mother and hostess, wasn't she also involved with things in town?

LHH: She organized the Town and Country Club, and she was the first president.

SW: What is the Town and Country Club?

LHH: It was a group that took in all of the different clubs. There was the Leisure Hour Club, the Hour Club, a study club, an art club, a gardening club, I don't know, a few others. They were all separate. And she organized it so they all met together once a month. They had a president, a vice-president, and a secretary. They always had a very short, ten-minute business meeting, and then they had a good speaker. It was an educational thing for the women. She organized that when I was in elementary or early high school, I forget which. Mother was a hard worker and she was a good organizer. She did her own things and let him do his. She didn't have to worry too much about the ranch except that when he wasn't there, he told her whatever things he wanted done. He was never gone much during the harvest season though.

She did lots of other things socially in town. She was in Shakespeare Club and was president of that for three terms. She was a member of the Christian Church. Her parents were some of the founders of the Woodland Christian Church.

The Family Remembers Elizabeth Hecke

Charles Hardy described his first impressions of Elizabeth Hecke when he moved to Yolanda after marrying Leila Hecke.

CH: Mrs. Hecke was like a mother to me. She was always doing nice little things for me, encouraging me. She was glad I was here, and I was a lot of protection for her because many of the men on the ranch were questionable characters, just ordinary laborers, you know. I was somebody she could always count on.

One of the people who remembers Elizabeth Hecke with great affection is her granddaughter, Charlotte Hardy Johnson.

SW: Charlotte, would you tell me a bit about your life as a child on the Yolanda Ranch. You lived there with your parents and grandparents, didn't you?

CHJ: Right, exactly. As a child, it was a very fascinating place to live. There was always something going on. During the harvest time, in the summer, we had a great many men. It seemed like it was seventy men. I couldn't give you the exact number, but as a child it seemed like a tremendous amount of men that were fed three times a day. They brought the men in by the Bell.

SW: Was that the famous Yolanda bell?

CHJ: Yes. So many of the men I knew well because they came back year after year. Like the tractor driver and Leo the Swiss milker who stood out in my mind, and Al Cook, the prune boss who we always used to say we thought he had spent many years in jail. But, a delightful man! And some, like Tom Yocum, who were around when I was little and I didn't even know until I became a teenager and they returned. He worked as a houseboy in the house. They used to work for my grandmother, and then they came back and worked for my mother.

SW: Did they live on the place?

CHJ: Oh, yes. Of course, the crew was cut down immensely for the winter time. But we still needed the milker and the teamster and a few of the people like that.

And I remember at Christmas time they always came in and spent Christmas Eve with us, especially Raymond Body who was my grandfather's faithful English bookkeeper. I think one of the funniest things was that he always gave my grandmother a volume of something from Shakespeare for Christmas. But most of the pages were always missing, and Volume III arrived long before Volume I ever did. They were never quite complete, but these were treasures of his that he brought from his family in England and gave to my grandmother.

SW: Tell me about your grandmother.

CHJ: Oh, she was absolutely the idol of my life. I just loved her. She came from a pioneer family. They homesteaded here in Woodland. She's related to everybody in town. There were five families that founded Woodland, and she was related to one of the five families.

My great-grandmother was Martha Browning Welch. They came to Woodland with the Browning Tribe, as we always called them. They were all my grandmother's relatives. That was the Hustons, the Lawsons and the Laugenours, the whole bunch of them. They all came out here from Kentucky and they all inter-married.

My grandfather used to tell this story: The girls in the family married the local doctor and the lawyer and the rancher and so forth and so on. My grandmother was the first one to marry out of the clan. Besides that, she married a foreigner. That was really bad news, because at that time my grandfather was just nothing. Here was this foreigner who was just a foreman on the ranch! Mother told the story that they were very much opposed to the marriage, very, absolutely, extremely opposed to it. But my great-grandfather Welch apparently wasn't the best of farmers, and if the story is correct, my grandfather helped him build a white picket fence around his home. He was so grateful that he had to let my grandmother marry him. There were a lot of rumors that this would never work; that she was marrying beneath her. So this was a kind of an interesting sideline to the story. And my grandfather, years later, had a few choice words to say about that. He had quite a few choice words to say about a lot of things.

SW: What did your grandmother look like. Was she tall?

CHJ: It seemed to me she was because I was a child. I think she was probably about 5'6" or 5'7" was all. She always had white hair, very white hair. I didn't think she looked older than my grandfather, but my mother kept saying she did.

How do I really describe her? She was just an absolute lady from the word go. She did everything for me and was just perfect. She spent the time with me that my own mother really didn't have the time to spend. I've named two of my girls after her. That's how much I thought of her.

We spent the summers at Lake Tahoe together. And I slept with her, you know, in the big room upstairs on the ranch when mother was away. The bed my dad sleeps in now, that was my bed. I slept in the same room with my grandmother and we were very close.

SW: You used to spend your summers at Lake Tahoe?

CHJ: Yes. Usually, when my grandmother was living, I spent the whole summer up there with her. After she passed away, I didn't go up quite as much as I did before.

SW: Would your whole family go up together?

CHJ: Yes. Of course, Dad only got about two weeks vacation, I think, or three. I've forgotten. They increased it after a while. So we would be up there a lot of times with a housekeeper.

Mother would come with my dad. She didn't stay unless my dad was there because she'd be taking care of the ranch. So she wouldn't spend all summer up there with us.

SW: So, as you were growing up, the important people in your family were very busy running the ranch.

CHJ: Absolutely. I think this was why I felt so strongly about my grandmother. She's the one that had the time to spend with me. And my aunt also. She taught in Sacramento, so she would be home on weekends. I used to go on picnics with her. And we would go to the Lake with her.

It was devastating for me when my grandmother died, because it was the first time I'd ever experienced death. Even though they told me it was coming, they sent me away at the time to visit a very dear friend of my mother's family in San Francisco. They knew how difficult it was for me. It never seemed that life was ever the same after she left because my grandfather had a series of housekeepers, and naturally they could never take her place.

SW: Your grandmother's death must have been devastating to your grandfather.

CHJ: Yes, although he never showed it. That's what I think bothered me more than anything. I can remember him very distinctly, picking me up at my friend's home and never mentioning it. And I thought, "How could he have lived with this woman all this time and never mention it." But I'm sure he was very devastated, because he depended upon her a lot more, I think, than he realized.

SW: And he probably couldn't talk about it.

CHJ: No, he couldn't talk about it. Of course he couldn't. But as I child, I didn't realize this. She kept the home fires going, definitely.

V. LEILA HECKE HARDY

Leila Hecke Hardy was born on the Yolanda Ranch in 1898 and she has lived there almost all her life. When she graduated from Woodland High School in 1918, her father turned over the management of the Yolanda Ranch to her. This event was duly reported in the San Francisco Chronicle on July 8, 1918, with the headline: "GIRL DIRECTS BIG FRUIT RANCH." Here is what she told the reporter who wrote that story:

> "I can see no reason," the vivacious and charming young miss declared, "why a girl cannot think, act and execute the everyday things of life precisely the same as a boy. We all like the trifling and easier things usually given over to women, but in a time like this I believe every woman possesses the grit and the executive ability if they will simply permit themselves to rise above the insignificant place custom has fixed for them."

In the years ahead, Leila Hecke Hardy was to show the world that she possessed "grit and executive ability." She graduated with honors in Agriculture from the University of California, taught school in Southern California, married, bore three children, judged countless agricultural fairs, and volunteered her services generously to the community. For fifty years she also managed the financial affairs of the Yolanda Ranch, and she continues to do so to this day.

Early Life and Schooling

SW: Leila, will you tell me about your own life now? When were you born?

LHH: I was born here on the ranch August 14, 1898. I wasn't a very good baby. I didn't get along too well on Mother's milk, and they had quite some time trying to find something that would agree with me. Finally I think we had a bit of goat's milk, and Mother always said that's why I was a good bucker. (laughter)

I was the oldest child. There were two others: my sister Martha, who was born in 1901, and my brother Harold in 1906. He died in infancy. My sister Martha and I grew up together. We both went to grammar school and high school here in Woodland. Then she went four years to Mills College and graduated in Home Economics. She was a dietician and she taught Home Economics at Cornell University, Whittier College, UCD, North Dakota and for a long time at Fort Collins, Colorado. When she retired, she moved to Rossmoor. She married very late in life a man whom I had gone to college with, Alton Davis. They were married about six years when she passed away in January of 1978.

Martha and Leila Hecke ride their pony cart to school in Woodland in 1910.

Marty, Tom and Charlotte Hardy enjoy a happy moment on the shore of Lake Tahoe in 1951.

I didn't start school until I was eight because my parents didn't want me to go alone and my sister was three and a half years younger. I remember that we had a pony cart and a funny little pony named Mr. Pipps. My sister and I drove our pony cart back and forth to my Aunt Jenny Dick's house in town on Walnut Street. Dad had fixed up a little barn at her house, and we'd unhitch our pony, put him in the barn, feed him and go to school. Then in the afternoon after school, we'd come back, pick up the pony and drive on home. In the wintertime when it was so cold, Mother always heated two bricks in the big old ranch kitchen stove, wrapped them in gunny sacks just as we left, and put them in the pony cart to keep our feet warm. Once the bricks were so hot the gunny sacks caught fire and we had to kick them out on the road.

SW: You said you started school when you were eight. Did you enter first grade?

LHH: Yes, I never got a change to go to kindergarten. My sister did, and she got a great deal out of it. Children are different, of course, but I think sometimes they let children go to school too early. My mind was more developed and things were easier for me because I had the advantage of a few years.

SW: Do you remember anything about what you did before you started school?

LHH: I can remember just very vaguely that Dad used to take me, when I was a tiny one, around the ranch on his bicycle. He'd put a little basket right in front on the handlebars, and I used to ride in that basket with him all around.

Then when Dad had a horse and buggy, he used to take me with him. He never rode a horse, but he always had lovely horses and a buggy. As I grew older, when I was available and not in school, I went with him on many of the trips he made, to big conventions and meetings. After my brother's death in 1906, Dad made me the boy of the family, so it was just taken for granted that I would go with him, and learn about farming and the land. I loved it. It was just what I wanted to do. I loved the outdoors. The land has been almost like a mother to me, producing what it has for us all.

SW: Where did you start school?

LHH: We started school at the Oak Street School in Woodland. Then we went to the Main Street School, and finally to the Walnut Street School.

SW: Do you remember any of your teachers?

LHH: Oh, very well. Our first grade teacher was Miss Rhoda Maxwell. Maxwell School was named for her. I went to her, Martha went to her, and our son went to her for a little bit of tutoring when he was in the second grade. The desk over there (pointing) was hers. I was fortunate enough to be able to buy it.

Some of the other teachers were Miss Shannon, Miss Gibson of the Gibson School and the Gibson family, and then there was Miss Lee. The Lee School was named for her. Mr. Whitehead was my teacher in my last year of grammar school. And a school is named for him. And there was Miss Simmons. A school never got named for her, but she was very worthy of it.

SW: Was there more than one grammar school in Woodland then?

LHH: There were three grammar schools: Oak School went up to the third grade, the Main Street School up to about the fourth or fifth grade, and finally the Walnut Street School up to the eighth grade. Mr. Whitehead was principal of the Walnut Street School.

SW: Did you always go to school in your pony cart?

LHH: Yes, for a good many years. Then the last year of grammar school and the first year of high school, we had a horse and buggy that we drove back and forth. When we went to high school, we didn't go to our aunt's house and leave the horse because they had a place out at the high school where you could leave it. Everybody that drove to the school had a place to leave their horses.

SW: You went to grammar school through the eighth grade, and then you went to high school?

LHH: Yes. The high school was where the junior high is now. It was a beautiful school. Mr. Hyman was the principal and Mrs. Lawhead was the vice-principal. The story was in those days that students who came from Woodland High School did not have to take entrance examinations at the University because the high school rated so high. And it was no wonder our school rated high with the University because we had some marvelous teachers. Mrs. Proctor was one, and Mr. Kellogg and Miss Simpson were outstanding.

SW: How many students were in your class?

LHH: I think about fifty. I just took the regular course for college-science and English. Fortunately I took four years of math and four years of language so I didn't have to take any of those in college.

I remember that just in the middle of our commencement exercises in 1918, four of our boys who had joined the Navy came in. Mr. Hyman had gotten permission for them to come to the exercises and get their diplomas. When they came in, the house just went wild. It was the most exciting thing to have these boys come in their Navy uniforms and sit down with the graduating class.

SW: I understand that you graduated valedictorian of your class. Did you give a speech?

LHH: Yes, I did. It started out, "Down the corridors of time....." I've forgotten the rest of it. Mrs. Lawhead was the instigator of that. She was the one who prepared most of the speeches for the students.

SW: You must have had a pleasant time in high school. Did you have lots of parties and activities?

LHH: Yes, we did. We had lots of nice parties here, and I took part in the things in high school. I was in two or three of the school plays, and I worked on the Ilex, which was our school paper. I don't remember too many of the things I did. I wasn't in any of the athletics. I couldn't be because after school I came home.

I do remember one of the best lessons I ever learned in high school. Shirley Deaver and I ran for editor of the Ilex, and he beat me by a very small margin. Of course, I was crushed. I remember that I found out about it at the dinner table in

the evening, and Mother said, "You call up Shirley and you congratulate him." And I said, "Why should I congratulate him, Mother? He won. I didn't." She said, "You should congratulate him, and you do it." My father gave me one look, and I did it. I called Shirley and congratulated him.

I never would have remembered that except that I wanted to defy my parents. But I did the right thing. That's the way that we learn — from doing things that your family teach you to do. I've tried to teach that to my children too when they've lost out on things. There's a lesson in that. We all get lessons in something. I got out of a lot of work by not being editor, and I could do something else.

SW: Did you help out at home after school?

LHH: No, Mother had a girl to help her.

My mother thought a great deal of education. She had had it, and she wanted us to have it. So, when we came home from school, we did our homework. I can remember that when we came in the house, we'd empty our lunch baskets and get them all cleaned up. Then we'd put on old clothes and sit right down and go to work. Oh, once in a while in the summertime we'd go for a swim and play around the yard a little bit. But we usually went right to our homework.

We went to bed early in the evening all through grammar school. In the wintertime, we sat around the dining room table and did what studying we had to do, and Dad and Mother would read. When it was time for us to go to bed, we took a little, tiny lamp and went upstairs. We had no electricity and a candle was too dangerous for us. Later on, of course, we had electricity.

SW: What did you do in the summer?

LHH: In the early summer, we cut apricots.

Then, Mother was very insistent that we have some place to go for a summer vacation. Her family had always gone up with horse and wagon to Lake County and stayed a month in the mountains there. So, in 1914 we went to Lake Tahoe and we stayed at Homewood. Mr. Jost owned and ran the place. We knew him, so we went there, and we had a wonderful time at the Lake. Well, that was the time that the first world war broke out, so we didn't go any place again until about 1916 when we went down to the Fair in San Diego.

Finally Mother persuaded Dad that we should buy a place at Tahoe. And how lucky we were! In 1919 we bought a cabin on the lakeshore very close to Homewood resort. We built a nice home there with a pier and a barbecue. Our children own it now. We really were fortunate to have it because we wouldn't be able to buy it now.

The Apricot Shed

SW: You said that in the early summer, you cut apricots. Do you remember how old you were?

LHH: I imagine I began cutting apricots when I was nine or ten years old.

SW: When did you take over the apricot operation?

LHH: I was a senior in high school when I took over the management of the apricot shed. I supervised the cutters and checked them out. There were four cutters to a table. Every cutter had a little tag pinned on their back. Every time they finished cutting a box of apricots, they got their tag punched. Each night the bookkeeper and I would record the number of punches in a book I had at home. I'd put a line under each day's tally so that the next day we would start the count again. The cutters would get credit for the number of boxes they had cut.

SW: What did the boxes have in them?

LHH: Fifty pounds of fresh fruit. The fruit was picked and brought into the shed in boxes. As a cutter needed fruit, they would yell, "Box!" and some of the men in the shed would give them a box, and I would come and punch their tag. We would take the empty box away, for in it were the pits that they had taken out of the apricots.

What they were doing was taking the whole apricot, cutting it in half, taking out the pit, and placing the apricot cup upright on the tray. You put the cup upright because when sulfured the center got full of juice, and you didn't want to let it run out on the trays because not only would you lose the juice, but it would make the 'cots stick to the trays. You had to be careful that the cutters always put the 'cots flat on the trays. They cut them with fruit knives which we furnished for them.

When about three or four trays were filled, two men came along and carried the trays to a little car in the shed. The car went on a little railroad track out to the sulfur house where the trays were sulfured for eight hours.

SW: How did they apply the sulfur?

LHH: The trays of cut apricots came into the sulfur house on a transfer car that would lift them down onto a little rack. Below five pounds of sulfur was put into a hole and lighted with a little piece of paper. Then the doors were shut, and it was left for eight hours. Then the doors were opened to let the fumes escape. The transfer car went in and lifted the trays and took them out to the dry yard where they were laid out flat to be dried. When dry, the men stacked them, and then the boys sorted the dried fruit. This is the way they were sorted: The ones that were perfect were called the Choice 'Cots and the ones that were broken were the Slabs. They were by far the sweetest. They were out of shape because they were overripe. You had to be careful for sometimes the girls would mash them, and a 'cot would become a Slab when it should have been a Choice one. Also there were the green ones and the little funny ones.

SW: What did they do with the green and funny ones?

LHH: They were sold, but I imagine they were ground for jams and for pies and for things like that. They were the cheapest. We hoped for not too many of those during the season.

SW: How many apricots were there in a box?

LHH: There were about thirty to fifty pounds per box. At first, they only got ten cents a box for cutting. Then they got twelve and a half cents, then fifteen cents, until

it got to be thirty and thirty-five cents a box. Now they are all cut by machinery. In the early days a good cutter always planned to make one dollar a day, cutting ten boxes if they possibly could. We'd have sixty, seventy and eighty cutters. One year we had so many! Dad had rented a ranch near here that he later bought. They had about fifteen to twenty acres of 'cots that year, and we had even a night crew.

SW: You'd actually be cutting twenty-four hours a day?

LHH: That was only one year, but it was for practically three weeks.

SW: How many days did you work in a week?

LHH: Six days a week. Oh, once in a while we worked on Sunday, and always on the Fourth of July. That was a hard time. Nobody wanted to work so we gave them ice cream that afternoon after they finished work. And at noontime the children were allowed to swim in the pool.

SW: Did you get more workers that way?

LHH: Oh, yes. We got lots and lots of children. Of course, they only did four boxes a day, or five maybe, for they got tired. Many of them were here with their mothers, and while the mothers worked, they did the little extra boxes or they played around outside. It was a busy, busy time.

Before I was in high school and had to go to town every morning to get cutters, I used to be one of the fastest cutters in the shed.

SW: How many boxes could you cut?

LHH: Oh, I always cut ten, sometimes twelve or thirteen boxes, according to the size of the 'cots. Some years there would be the larger fruit.

SW: Did you have a particular way of holding the 'cot in your hand?

LHH: If you knew how to do it, you started in by cutting with one motion following the suture. You opened the cot, and then the pit fell out if it was just a regular ripe 'cot. Otherwise, if it was soft, you'd have to take your finger and toss out the pit. If it was green, you'd have to pull out the pit, which was slow. If you knew how to do it, you could just flip out the pits just like that! There was a rhythm to it. I learned from some other cutters who were real alert, and I kept up with them.

I wasn't too keen about running the shed at first, but afterwards I liked it.

SW: When you ran the shed, were you the one who had to keep the records of how many boxes were done and who did them?

LHH: Yes. I kept a record each night in a book. Lots of the children played around. They'd lose their cards or they'd tear them, and we'd have to make new ones. Fortunately we had a record so we knew what they were doing.

SW: Did you do the actual hiring of the cutters?

LHH: Oh, yes. Most of them came and asked for work. We knew they could do the work, and they did. In the early days, I drove a seven-passenger Maxwell automobile to three places in Woodland: the east end, the middle of Main Street, and the west end. I'd pick up seven or eight older ladies and bring them out to the ranch.

SW: This was while you were still in high school?

LHH: Yes, during high school and while I was managing the shed. I could drive a car.

Then, too, we had a flatbed truck -- no top to it and no sides. We'd go to the same three places, and the children got onto the truck. They sat on the bed of the truck and hung their feet over the sides. You never could do that now, of course. The children did devilish things, but we had a careful driver and no child fortunately was ever, ever hurt. They would go down Main Street yelling, "Who are, who are, who are we? Hecke's fruit cutters, don't you see? Are we in it, well I guess. Hecke, Hecke, Hecke, yes, yes, yes!"

SW: And that's how you got your cutters? (laughter)

LHH: Yes. A few of them came out in their own cars, but not very many.

In the evening, we'd try to finish work by five o'clock and take them back to town a little after 5:00, by the same process, in the flatbed truck. I'd like to have the cutters finish by 5:00 because the men had to clean up afterwards. They had to sweep the floors where the kids had thrown pits all over. I had to watch to see they didn't throw pits at each other! I was a kid myself so it didn't bother me. Then the last trays of fruit that they had finished had to be taken out and put into the sulfur house. And the boxes of fruit had to be put out. The next morning the trucks would pick up the empty boxes and take them out to the fields so that when the pickers came they had boxes. The same pickup trucks picked up the boxes when they were full and brought them into the shed. From there we'd give them out to the cutters.

SW: Did you give the cutters lunch?

LHH: No. They brought their own lunch.

SW: Did they have a lunch hour?

LHH: Yes. They had the lunch hour because the men had a lunch hour. The men didn't like them cutting during that time because there were a lot of little kids who would do mischievous things like trade their box for somebody else's box that had a lot less fruit than theirs or put some of their fruit in other boxes, and things like that. So, we had to keep them out of the sheds.

The children had a lot of fun, too, playing around outside. We let them swim at noontime. That was another thing that we never could do now. The insurance would be so high. I have to keep our pool empty part of the time now because the children sneak in when you aren't there, and they could sue you if they got hurt or drowned in the pool.

SW: Did you ever cut apricots by machine here?

LHH: No. The last five years, before we took out our apricots, we were the only ranch around this part of the county that had apricots that were cut by hand. Children got more money in those days doing something else, and cutting wasn't much fun. I said, "Dad, let's sell the 'cots to the canneries." So we began selling to the canneries about '38 or '39.

The canneries from San Jose and San Francisco sent trucks to Winters and they got all the 'cots they needed. They'd send bobtails over here to get our apricots. It didn't work out to be too satisfactory. They wouldn't always send the truck on time. They'd get here at 6:30 or 7:00 at night and we'd have to hold the men over to load. So after Dad turned the ranch over to Charles and me in 1945, we dug out all the apricot trees and we put in alfalfa, sugar beets and grain. That was in about '47 or '48.

SW: Who managed the apricot shed when you were gone at college? Did your mother do that?

LHH: No, she managed the shed for a few years when I was much younger, but she never liked it. She didn't enjoy doing that at all, so that's why Dad put me in charge. I came home every summer from college and did it, even when I was teaching in Southern California. You see, school was out before the apricot season. It was a task, getting up early in the morning, and you'd work until eight o'clock at night before you'd finish your books. But I enjoyed it.

Studying Agriculture at the University

SW: You graduated from high school in 1918. Where did you go to college?

LHH: When I graduated from high school, Mother wanted me to go back east to Bryn Mawr. She thought that girls ought to go to a finishing school. But when the time came, I didn't want to go and Dad didn't want me to go, and Mother hated to see me go. So they settled on Mills "because all nice girls went to Mills." I went to Mills for two years and took the regular academic course for graduation.

Then I went to Berkeley and took Ag, and, oh, I just loved Berkeley. I had a wonderful time there. I loved all those wonderful professors. The second half of my junior year at Berkeley, I went to Davis because I was majoring in Agriculture.

SW: Weren't you one of the first women to graduate in Agriculture?

LHH: That's right. I graduated in 1922, and Ruth Hartwell was in the class with me. One or two other girls had graduated in Agriculture before we did.

SW: And you also graduated Phi Beta Kappa?

LHH: Yes, I did, and I made Prytanean, which is an honorary society. I was very fortunate to do that.

SW: When you were in Berkeley, where did you live?

LHH: I lived in a sorority house. I was lucky to join a sorority because when you're a junior transfer, it's harder. I went Alpha Chi Omega. I didn't know too many when I came, and they weren't really interested in juniors. I can't blame them. Why

take in a junior girl when you can get a good freshman with four years to develop and do something for the sorority? But, fortunately, I did pretty well.

SW: Did you enjoy being in the sorority?

LHH: Very much. I had very good friends, and I keep in touch with them now. There were lots of parties and lots of things going on.

I really enjoyed the University. The boys in my classes were all good to me. Nobody was snippy to me, and nobody was fresh. They just took me in as anybody else would be taken in even though I was the only girl in the class most of the time.

SW: Do you remember what classes you took?

LHH: Yes, I took Entomology, Pathology, Farm Management, Horticulture, Pomology, Agronomy, Animal Husbandry, and I had to take one class in Farm Mechanics. Of course, I was just the dumbest in that class. We all had partners, but the teacher was very kind. He gave me a very bright, keen young fellow who put up with having a dumb partner. We got along just fine. The tractors that we tore down and put together -- well, they went, but I didn't have anything to do about it. But anyway, I learned a few things about farm machinery that were useful.

SW: Was it a regular thing for Ag students to come to Davis?

LHH: Yes, it was required for six months.

I'd like to mention some of those wonderful professors I had. There was R.L. Adams, Dr. Whitten, Mr. Essig, Mr. Herms, Mr. Tufts, Bobby Miller, Jim Wilson and Mr. Hosfedder. Mr. Stillman was the head, I think, of that Farm Mechanics department. They were all wonderful, wonderful teachers.

We had a final examination in Pomology under Professor Herms. It was in two parts. In one part of the exam you had to identify 100 varieties of apples. I had learned some of those varieties of apples from Dad, who had brought them home from the P.P.I.E. (Pan-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915). He was a judge there.

Mr. Essig wrote the best book that has ever been written on Entomology. He was the head of the Entomology Department. Later when he was in Dad's department (the State Department of Agriculture) he wrote a book, and I guess students would pay twenty dollars to get a copy of it. Of course, I had a copy because it was printed in the State Department of Agriculture as a bulletin originally.

You worked with a lot of professors and that was fun. They knew what they were doing. They taught you things that were right down to earth. There was no fancy business. You learned Agriculture.

SW: When you were taking classes at Davis, did you live at home?

LHH: Yes. I drove back and forth to the college every day. I was never going to take any Saturday classes, but, of course, I wound up with a Saturday class when I was at the University. I had one semester at Davis, during my junior year, then I returned to Berkeley for my senior year.

I took Animal Husbandry with Mr. Hughes. We had to judge livestock. They'd bring in five cows, or five sheep, or five hogs, and we'd learn how to place each one of them in their group.

The students had teams for judging and you competed with other schools in California and even up into Oregon and Washington. I always wanted to go, and they wanted to send me so much because I really did very well in judging. It came easy to me. But the students were practically all boys, and they slept in one dormitory. What are they going to do with the one girl? In those days they didn't know what to do, so I never got to go.

SW: Nowadays they would let you go, wouldn't they?

LHH: Sure! They'd work it out some way.

But, I tell you, Bobby Miller, Jim Wilson and Mr. Hughes -- those people in that Animal Husbandry Department were the best in the United States. You just couldn't beat them. I can remember now how they taught us to judge cattle. "I place Cow No. 3, 2, 1," or something like that. You just had a regular routine. If you did it, it came out perfectly. But you had to give your reasons.

SW: Did you feel you got really good, solid, practical agricultural education from the combination of Berkeley and Davis?

LHH: Yes, I did. One of my professors told Dad, "That daughter of yours will make a good farm manager. She'll probably break you in the process, but when she gets through, she'll probably be all right." That was Mr. Adams. He lived in Berkeley, but he spent one day a week in Davis, going back and forth on the train.

I had funny little ideas when I came back from college. I learned a lot of theory that didn't always work out in practice. But that's all right. You have to learn all of that.

Managing the Ranch

SW: After you graduated from Berkeley in 1922, what did you do?

LHH: I came back here and worked the apricots that year, just like I always did. Then I managed the ranch for about two or three years.

SW: Did you take over the whole ranch?

LHH: Yes. Dad was working in Sacramento, and I had a foreman here to help me. I went out twice or three times a day with the foreman in a little horse and cart, watched what the men were doing, inspected and checked. I also did all the buying for the kitchen and the culinary department.

SW: Did you plan the year's activities?

LHH: Yes. It wasn't so much planning. If the crop was big, you'd need a lot of men. There were two or three employment offices in Sacramento, but we went to Mr. Ralph of the Wide Awake Employment Office on Two Street. We'd call him and we'd say, "Mr. Ralph, find me five men to pick prunes." Or, "I need a

carpenter," or "I need a teamster," or "I need a milker." He'd say, "Ok. I'll call you tonight." And then about half past five he'd call and say, "Meet the 6:00 train and I'll have the whole bunch," or "I couldn't get them all. I'll have the rest of them for you tomorrow." Then I'd take the car in to Woodland and pick up these fellows off the Sacramento-Northern train. They'd have dinner here and start work the next morning.

SW: So, you would oversee all of the ranch operations, do the buying for the kitchen, and keep the books?

LHH: And I'd keep things going as best I could.

I remember once, this was before I was married, when Dad was in Washington, D.C. It was the time when the I.W.W.'s (International Workers of the World) were beginning to feel their strength a little bit. We were so fortunate to have six or eight or ten faithful men here that were just so loyal. Well, that day, one of these men came in and said, "The men are going to strike tonight." And I said, "Well, thank you for that." I called Sheriff Monroe to come out and told him what was going to happen. He said, "All right. You handle it. I'll just stand around."

About 6:15 the men all came up and wanted to see me. I went out on the side porch and I stood up high enough on the porch so I could be a little bit above them because I was short. They said they wanted more money, and they wanted more of this and they wanted more of that. They were mumbling and grumbling like a crowd of fifty or sixty men would do. I said, "Well look. My father's in the east. I can't do a thing about it for you. He's the one that sets the wages, and I just see that you have your work, your accommodations and your board. I can't do any more than that. My suggestion is to you -- if you don't like it, I'll give you your checks and you can go tonight. Otherwise stay on until he comes back."

Mr. Monroe got up and he said, "You know, I think the young lady gave you pretty good advice. Maybe you had just better take it and go back to work, or quit."

They all went back to work, and we never had another bit of trouble. That was the only time we ever did, and surely God had me by the hand then and many more times.

SW: How old were you then?

LHH: I was around twenty-four.

Teaching in Southern California

SW: After a couple of years of managing the ranch, you went to Southern California as a teacher. Would you tell me about that?

LHH: I had a love affair and Mother and Dad thought it would be a good idea for me to go away from home for a while. I really bucked against that, but I knew in my heart, darned right, that I should.

Dad had so many connections in agriculture that it was no trouble for him to get me a job in Los Angeles. So I got a job out in the San Fernando Valley teaching agriculture.

About half of the children I taught were Mexicans and children of the ranches around the valley. Farmers came in from the midwest and bought two, three, or maybe four acres. They had chicken and rabbits and vegetables and sometimes a goat. Cows were too big and too expensive.

I taught in about five grammer schools, not in the high schools. You see, I didn't have a teacher's credential. I suppose I got this job through Dad's influence. I had to go to night school to get my credential so I could teach high school. I drove into Los Angeles two and three nights a week to classes.

In the schools there were gardens. Each class had a plot. The kids would plant carrots, lettuce, beets, radishes, turnips, onions. Of course, they liked the radishes best because they could eat them first. I taught them how to prepare the soil and how to plant the seeds, how to irrigate them, how to weed them. And then they were allowed to take the produce home.

In the wintertime we had lessons in agriculture inside the classroom. I liked it. I really liked the students, and there I met Charles. He was a teacher in the same school.

During my first year, they put in a new school. People were coming into the valley by the hundreds, so they had to build the school in a hurry. They chased the carpenters out as the new students came in. The youngsters had to pick up all the lumber and the nails and everything off the ground to get the ground ready for the garden plots.

The principal of one school had been a sergeant in the Army and he treated everybody like the military. He made the boys salute the flag. The first day of class they all came in nice clothes, and he made them get down on the dirty ground that hadn't been cleaned up yet to do push-ups. The poor kids got all dirty and dusty.

That principal had no use for me. "What does a woman know about agriculture! Besides," he said, "You don't know how to teach and your voice is not good."

Well, I was crushed. In the other four schools I got along fine. So my school advisor said, "Don't worry. We've got other schools where we can put you. We've got a man that can handle the principal. He's a good tough one. Let's put Charles Hardy in there."

Charles got along with the principal all right. When the man started getting demanding, Charles would say, "All right, let's just stop a minute. We're not doing this like the military. We're doing this from a scholastic standpoint." And he got along just fine. Then Charles and I started going together. The second year that I taught out in the valley, he taught in a high school. I couldn't teach there until I got my secondary credential. By that time we had decided that we were going to get married and come here to the ranch, so I didn't bother with going any further in teaching. But I did get my high school credential.

SW: So, you were actually down in southern California about two years. Did you come back up to the ranch in the summer?

LHH: I always spent my summers here.

SW: Did Charles ever come up with you?

LHH: Yes. The first time he ever came up was at the end of the first year. I was at Tahoe and he came up to visit his brother in Reno. He came over and met my mother and father.

We weren't going together very much then. But the next year, when we went back south, we started dating very steadily. Charles came up here and spent Thanksgiving and Christmas that year and we were married the following year on the third of June, 1928, right after school was out.

Leila and Charles Hardy Live on the Ranch

Dad built that little house for us right over there (pointing). We lived there until his death in '53.

Charles managed the ranch for a couple of years after we were married. Then the Depression was on. Dad went to San Francisco to work on the World's Fair at Treasure Island. One reason he took that job was to make a little extra money to help through the Depression. There was a foreman on the ranch, and Charles and I decided that we could manage the foreman and the ranch with Dad going back and forth to San Francisco and Charles could take a job in Woodland. The position of Deputy Agricultural Commissioner was open in Woodland, and Charles took that. He was here on the ranch morning and night, and Saturday afternoons and Sundays. He helped me, and I helped with the foreman, and we got along fine.

Family Life

We had three children. Our first child, Charlotte, was born in November of 1929, our son Tom was born three years later, and then Martha two years later.

Charlotte went to grammar school and high school here, and then she went to San Jose State and graduated with a teacher's credential. She married Cyrus Johnson, who was a lieutenant in the Navy. She taught school in Pasadena when they were first married. When he was through with the service, he worked for the Bureau of Internal Revenue for several years in Los Angeles and then they moved up to Atherton and were there for about two years. Later he had an opportunity to go in with a law firm in Sacramento, Diepenbrock, Wulff, Plant and Hannigan, and he joined that firm and is their estate planner and tax attorney.

Charlotte had three girls. The oldest daughter is a sophomore at Berkeley. She second daughter died. She met with a fatal accident in 1978. The youngest one Julie is a freshman in high school.

Our Tom graduated from the high school here, and went six months to (U.C.) Davis. That was during the Korean War and he was going to be drafted. He and his dad decided that it would be better for him to enlist in the Navy than to be drafted into the Army. So, he went into the service, and was killed during the war.

Marty graduated from high school here, and she went to San Jose State for three years. The last year she transferred to Chico State because she was

engaged to Walter Stile whose family lived up there. They were married, and she got her credential there. They had one son who is now in his second year of the University of Washington in Seattle.

SW: Did your children do any work around the ranch?

LHH: Yes. As our children got older, they cut apricots. Tom worked out in the field. He picked fruit, or he very often drove the truck for us. He loved that, of course.

SW: Were you trying to train Tom to take over the ranch as your father had trained you?

LHH: Yes, and he loved it. He really liked the land. He wasn't the energetic, aggressive type of person that Charlotte was. She was more like me, more like Dad. Tom was more like Charles. He was quiet and he loved the land. After he was killed, the ranch just lost a lot of interest for us. Charlotte was not a ranch girl in any sense of the word and Marty never wanted to live on the ranch.

SW: Did you and Charles take an interest in your children's activities at school?

LHH: Yes. Charles was President of the Board of Education for quite some years, and I took an active interest as long as the children were in school. I was a substitute teacher in the schools. I substituted in English, Math and Agriculture four or five different times. When Charles went on the School Board, I had to stop as I couldn't substitute any more.

I taught Sunday School at the Christian Church for about sixteen years.

We always had lots of parties here. The children had parties when the pool was full. That was just part of growing up.

SW: Just like cutting the apricots was part of growing up?

LHH: Yes, until we got rid of the apricots. The children were real glad then. They didn't like working in the fruit very much.

SW: When your children went to college and left home, what did you do then?

LHH: Oh, lots of things. Charles and I judged at agricultural fairs, and I handled the books for the ranch and did ranch errands in Woodland. One year I was the chairman of the Red Cross for Yolo County.

One of the most rewarding things for me personally was to work with the Sub Deb Club at the high school. I worked with them for two years, first as Assistant Leader and then I was Leader the second year. It was an older club, one that had been there for years and years.

SW: What did they do in the Sub Deb Club?

LHH: The first month or so they were busy initiating new members, making them do crazy things at school. After that they began raising money. They had cake sales, rummage sales, any kind that the Leader would help them with, and they would give the money to charity, mostly for Red Cross, or for Cancer, or for things that they decided upon.

Along with the fund-raising, they were taught some of the niceties of life, such as good manners. When they had a dance, we taught them how to introduce their escort to us and how to meet and greet people. They were told how to serve meals and how to set the table.

They had teas, and they'd invite all their mothers and their friends. They had teas here several times. We'd have two silver services on the table, the coffee at one end and the tea at the other. The girls would make nice sandwiches, and they would be in their pretty clothes and serve. They were hostesses. We taught them all the manners we could at these little parties. The girls felt this was awfully foolish, you know, the introducing and all. We had a little trouble making them come up and introduce their dates to us, but we told them that was the polite thing to do, and if they never had to do it, it didn't make any difference, they'd know how.

Along with the parties, they learned other things, such as how to conduct meetings and to follow Robert's Rules of Order.

I really enjoyed it. I had good rapport with the youngsters. They were nice to me and they cooperated. Some of the leaders had trouble with them, but I never did.

SW: You had had a lot of experience working with young people in the apricot shed, hadn't you?

LHH: Yes, I did and I liked the youngsters. You don't talk to them from here (pointing up). You talk to them from here (at eye level).

SW: Your short stature was very handy, wasn't it?

LHH: Yes. And I got along with the Mexicans the same way.

We had lots of interesting experiences with our workers. When I started managing the ranch in the early twenties, you could manage the workers a lot better than you can now. Fortunately we haven't got union labor here on the ranch yet. When we do, it's going to be a sad time. I hope I won't be farming.

You know, I feel that unions were needed. Oh my, they were needed when they first came in. They grew strong and now they are overpowering. Now a lot of the people who belong to unions don't want to join the union. They're not fair. You take these men that stayed with us. We made work for them in the winter time. Dad let them work maybe an hour or two in the morning for their board and room. They had no money, but they had their board and room. It didn't cost them anything, and they were here through the whole year.

In the early days you didn't have Compensation Insurance. We do now, which is right. They should have it. In those days we looked out for the men. Mother would go out and cook them meals when they were sick, and I did later. We gave them castor oil and aspirin and all of the good old remedies in those days. When they got old, they stayed here and had their room and board. In their last days, we put them in the hospital, and when they died we buried them.

That kind of life is completely gone. Now you have so much machinery, and the Mexicans couldn't care less, with the exception of a few. We have two or

three families here, the children of the original ones, who have lived here since 1941. We look out for them and they look out for us.

We're going to have some more trouble. This money situation, this energy situation, this gasoline -- all these are going to be bad. The people who are striking for wages had better hang on to their jobs.

I think the time of barter is going to be back. If I give you your meals and room, you will work for me for just a small amount of money, or you will give me something else in return. If you come out and want to buy some garden vegetables, fine. Then you will give me something that I don't have in return. You will help me on the ranch, or you will spade up the garden for me or water it for me. I think that time is coming. It's not going to last forever, but I think it's coming. I hope I'm wrong.

SW: There was one more subject I wanted to ask you about. Didn't you and Charles go to Europe on a vacation in the 1950s?

LHH: Yes. Charlotte was in Mainz, Germany then. She wanted to go to Europe and the Army of Occupation offered her a job teaching school over there. After she had been there about seven months, Charles and I decided that we would like to go visit her. Charles' brother and his wife wanted to go, and they said, "Why don't you come with us?" Well, I think it was good for us to get away. Dad had died in '53, and Charles' mother died in '53. Then Tom died in '54.

So we planned to go to Europe. But about a week before we were to leave, I fell and I broke my leg. We thought the accident was going to end our plans, but I said, "If you give me about two weeks longer, I will go to Europe in a cast. And I can do it." So, we did.

Well, now, in those three weeks until we left, I wrote to every Chamber of Commerce, to every consulate in San Francisco from Italy, France, Germany and Switzerland, and I got all the literature, I read and I read and I read. I studied my French, and I studied my German course I taken in college, and I planned the trip pretty much.

We left in April of '55 and we flew first to Scotland and then we went to France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Holland, England, Denmark, and Sweden and then home. We were in Europe for about three months.

We bought a car for the four of us and we had no planned trip. We got along just fine and we had a good time. We saw what Europe was really like, before they planned it for the tourist. We had our wedding anniversary with Charlotte in Germany, and then we came back here about the twelfth of June just as the ranch work was beginning in full swing.

SW: Did you still have apricots then?

LHH: No. By that time we had leased the land. After Tom's death, we didn't know what we wanted to do. We farmed the ranch ourselves for about three or four years, and then we leased it so we didn't have to be bothered with that part of it.

Growing Up on the Ranch

SW: We talked briefly to Charlotte Hardy Johnson about her mother and about her own life on Yolanda. Charlotte, tell me, did you go to school in Woodland?

CHJ: Right.

SW: How did you get to school?

CHJ: My dad took me and my sister and brother in the car on his way to work, and then my mother picked us up in the afternoon. In seventh and eighth grade I'd sometimes ride my bicycle in good weather if I wanted to stay after school or something like that. Then when I was in high school, I either got a ride with a friend who'd bring me home or I'd go on the bus.

SW: What schools did you go to?

CHJ: I first went to Dingle, then I went to Beamer, and then I went back to Dingle. During the war in the forties Dingle became very crowded and they said that if we were going to continue in the city schools, I'd have to go to Beamer. Obviously I should not have been going to the city schools because I was not in the city. But because my dad was on the Board of Education, he could get us into the city schools. So I went across town to Beamer. It only went up to sixth grade, so, of course, I had to come back to Dingle and finish up seventh and eighth grade. They had no junior high then. Then I went to Woodland High School.

SW: Was the high school you went to the one that is now Douglass Junior High?

CHJ: Yes. It's the one with the pillars on College Street.

SW: From there you went to San Jose State. Did you return to the ranch after you graduated from college?

CHJ: No, I never returned at all except for summers and holidays. Right after I graduated, I taught school in Palo Alto. Then I taught in Europe for two years in Germany. After that I went to Southern California and taught there for a year. I married my husband then and continued teaching.

SW: It was while you were teaching in Germany that your parents came on the visit to Europe, wasn't it?

CHJ: Right. In 1955 in the spring. I was teaching in the Army School for Dependents in Mainz, Germany. I taught elementary. It was interesting, you know, to go to Europe at that time. Not so many of us did it then as do now. My daughter is going to the University of Edinburgh this summer.

SW: That's great. I wonder if we could change the subject, Charlotte. I'm trying to build a picture of your mother. I think her personality will come through because much of this book will actually be her words. Did you see much of her when you were growing up?

CHJ: Yes. You know, she was home. She wasn't out of town, so to speak. She was very busy with the ranch, and after my grandmother passed away, she was even busier. She always had somebody to help her with the housework and a lot of the cooking.

But, as I've often said to her, "You know, Mother, I really think you would have done better with a nine-to-five job. You would have had more time to spend with us." And she said, "I agree with you."

SW: She told me that she was raised to be the man of the house.

CHJ: Yes, that's right.

SW: I have the impression that she took this role very seriously.

CHJ: Yes, always. And still the ranch is extremely important to her.

SW: She said her father took her with him when she was very small so that she would learn the business of farming.

CHJ: Oh, yes, absolutely. And she probably told you that she went to Mills College for two years and then the University of California, and six months at Davis.

SW: Yes. Studying agriculture seemed very exciting for her.

CHJ: I think it was. I think it was very unique and new. And she was the only girl in the class, too. I don't think she minded that at all. She always said they let her get up in the front of the room. Of course, she's short anyway. So I think it was fun for her.

SW: She was an excellent student, too, judging from her academic record.

CHJ: I'm sure she told you that she's a Phi Beta Kappa and Prytanean. She's very proud of that.

SW: Do you have anything that you'd like to have included in this story?

CHJ: I can't think of anything in particular. I think as far as agriculture is concerned, Mother and Dad could tell you a lot more. Their whole life centered around that -- night, day, Sundays and all. I haven't had a terrific interest in agriculture myself, or in the ranch particularly. My sister hasn't either.

SW: Is your sister a teacher also?

CHJ: No, she graduated in business. In fact, she got married before she got out of college, and then she finished up in business. She's with a bank right now. She lives in Friday Harbor in the San Juan Islands.

My husband actually has a great deal of interest in agriculture, which is surprising. He's a tax attorney, but so much of his work is with agriculture. And we've gone into the grape business down by Hood along the Sacramento River in Sacramento County. We sell our grapes to J. Lohr in Los Gatos. They particularly like the sugar content that we have. Or we sell to Christian Brothers. It's just a new vineyard, but it has been very productive. We're in it with about five other people. We probably own enough to put in your ear.

SW: You seem to have inherited something from your grandfather, the viticulturalist!

CHJ: Yes. We've been very interested in this wine. It's a Chenin Blanc. The label is J. Lohr. We won first prize in the Los Angeles County Fair. Since then the price of the wine has tripled.

I've always had an interest in wines. We did have grapes at Yolanda at one time. Then I worked for the wine judges at the State Fair in Sacramento when I was going to college.

Maynard Ameurine of UCD happened to be in Germany at the same time I was, and through connections of my family, I spent a lot of time going out to dinner with him. It was an education in itself to have dinner with Maynard. He's a charmer, and, of course, there's nobody that knows more about wine than he does.

VI. CHARLES HENRY HARDY

Charles Hardy and Leila Hecke were married on June 3, 1928, in the living room of the big house on the Yolanda Ranch. Soon after the wedding, they moved to the ranch and they have lived there ever since.

Their partnership -- in running the ranch, raising their family, judging at agricultural fairs, and sharing all kinds of community service -- has been a durable and remarkably successful one. As Charles Hardy says, "All along we'd help each other. For a good fifty years, when we had a job to do, we did it."

This chapter presents the story of Charles Hardy's life in his words and those of his daughter Charlotte and of Herb Chandler who succeeded him as Agricultural Commissioner of Yolo County.

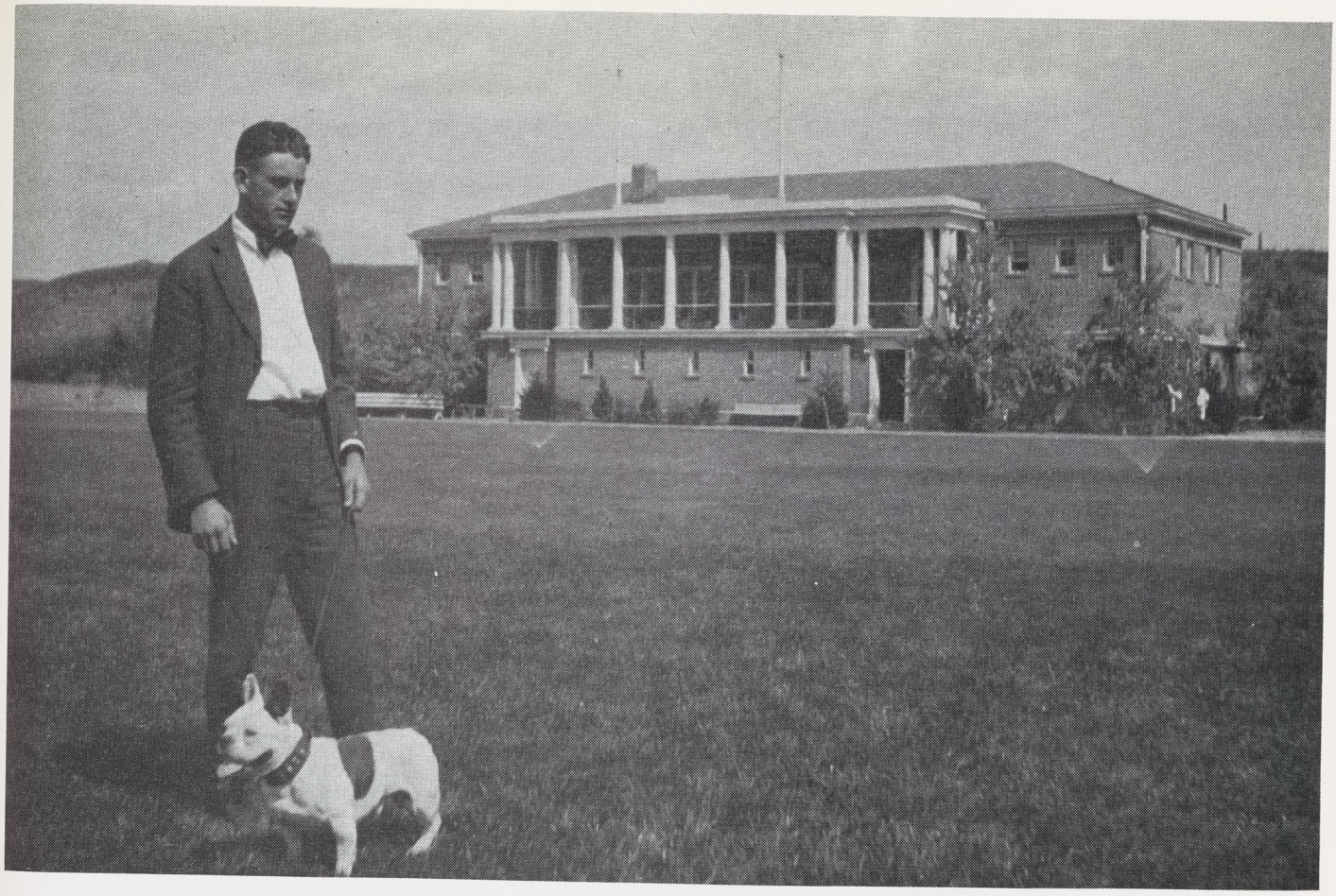
Charles Hardy was born in Denver, Colorado, and raised in Southern California. He graduated from the University of Nevada in 1922 and taught biology and agriculture in Los Angeles high schools until his marriage to Leila Hecke. For several years after that he was the full-time manager of the Yolanda Ranch, and then he entered the office of the Yolo County Agricultural Commissioner. He served as Deputy Agricultural Commissioner from 1930-1936, and as Agricultural Commissioner and Sealer of Weights and Measures from 1936 until his retirement in 1964.

Charles Hardy has always led a full life. While he was Agricultural Commissioner, he served on the Woodland Board of Education and on the boards of the 40th District Agricultural Fair, the State Fair Exhibitors' Association, the Agricultural Commissioners' Association of California, and the California Association of Weights and Measures Officials. He designed the Yolo County official flag in 1941, and during World War II, he was chairman of the Yolo County Defense Council which coordinated all local war efforts. He began judging at agricultural fairs in 1932, and for the next 40 years he judged at fairs all over California. Now retired, he continues his interest in fairs, in agriculture, in his family, and above all, in the Yolanda Ranch.

Early Life

SW: Mr. Hardy, I'd like to ask you about your own life now. Would you please tell me where you were born?

CHH: I was born in Denver, Colorado, on May 3, 1898.



Charles Hardy walked the bulldog in Mackay Stadium on the University of Nevada campus in 1917.

This picture of Leila Hecke appeared in the newspapers when her engagement to Charles Hardy was announced in 1928.

SW: Did you have brothers and sisters?

CHH: Yes, I had two brothers and two sisters, five in all in the family.

SW: Did you grow up in Denver?

CHH: No. My folks migrated to Anaheim Landing, near Long Beach, in 1900, due to the fact that my brother Frank had very bad sinus problems. At that time I was just two years old. My father then moved to Los Angeles and went into the real estate business there with an old friend of his that he knew in Denver.

We lived in Los Angeles at 1129 South Hill Street, which is now directly across from the L.A. Examiner building and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. I can recall that we had a cow and chickens, and we chained the cow out in the area where the Los Angeles Examiner publishes newspapers.

Near our house, about twelve blocks away, there was Chutes Park where they used to have the traveling circus come to town. I can recall when I was a little kid, we used to run there and put seats up for the circus people. I can remember the principal of my school coming down and rounding up the boys that played hookey. He took them into his office and one by one, he administered a belt strap against our legs. That style of learning really worked on me! I can remember that school, right there in the heart of Los Angeles at 16th and Hill streets. Each week each boy was delegated to go down to the basement and bring up coal to keep the fire burning in the old coal stove in the school.

We lived in Los Angeles until 1908. Then my brother graduated from high school and he was looking for something to do. As my father was born in Iowa, his idea was always to get back to the land, so we bought a 2200 acre ranch in Ventura County. On that ranch, my brother Frank and his new wife lived with our family. Later my brother's father-in-law built him a home adjacent to ours. We farmed there for some five years or more.

CHH: We were interested in cattle. We had about 350 head of cattle on the place there. Then we had five or six head of milk cows that we milked, and we had several pens of hogs. We tried to be self-sufficient. We only went to town once a month, and that's when we took in a load of hogs or we had to go to town for some necessity such as staples. We were more or less self-sustaining there.

SW: When you say "town," are you talking about Los Angeles?

CHH: No. We're talking about Ventura, which was a distance of about fifteen miles. In order to get to Ventura, we had to cross the Santa Ana River and also the Ventura River. During the winter months, the big boulders used to crash down and sometimes it was a week before we could cross over with the horse and wagons because there were no bridges at that time.

SW: During the time you were grammar school age, did they have a school nearby?

CHH: Yes. I went to the Santa Ana grammar school, which was a little country school about a mile and a half away from the ranch. It was a one-teacher school, and a teacher who, as I recall, had graduated from Mills College. I'll always remember the slogan she gave the school. She called us the Rough Riders because we always rode burros to school. The school yard was fenced in, and we just turned the

burros loose in the school yard. We used to have burro races with each other to see whose burro would go the fastest. Those burros would eat anything and everything, and they were a tough animal. They were rather gentle, though, and that's why, I guess, the folks allowed us to have burros.

SW: The school couldn't have been very big. Was it?

CHH: No. The school had all grades, and I think there must have been about fourteen of us kids.

SW: Did you live there when you were in high school?

CHH: No. My mother took sick, and she had to go back to Los Angeles and live with my sister whose husband was a dentist. When I graduated from grammar school, which was about 1913, my father said he wasn't going to stay at the ranch any longer. After my mother left, there was just my father and myself, two hired men and a Chinese cook there. My father decided that he wanted to sell the ranch and go back to Los Angeles to live with my mother. So he traded the ranch for a fifty-acre orange grove in Corona and a big apartment house in Long Beach.

I went to Los Angeles High School, which was located at that particular time on Bunker Hill, up where the Civic Center is now. It was an old high school, and my two brothers had gone there. I can recall that they removed an old graveyard to enlarge the athletic field. While they were grading the graveyard, I remember as a kid going out there and picking up human bones.

I went to school on the street car. It was about an hour and a quarter trip.

College Years

SW: When you graduated from high school, did you go to college?

CHH: Yes. I matriculated at the University of Southern California and went there for six months. Then during that next summer, I went looking for a job.

A friend and I, we climbed in a boxcar and we didn't know where we were going, but we wanted to go to Goldfield, Nevada. We heard you could get a job there.

Well, we rode as far as Beatty, Nevada, and then we had to take the Tonopah and Bullfrog Railroad. When we got to Beatty, we were without any funds whatever, just the clothes we had on our backs. We talked to the conductor and told him we were two kids and if we got a job at Goldfield, we would surely reimburse the railroad. He said, "Kids, don't say anything. Just as soon as the car starts, you get on and go." So we rode into Goldfield.

That night we looked around for something to eat. We went to a Chinaman's place and told the Chinaman we were hungry and we wanted something to eat. He said, "Well, you likee do a job washee dishee? You come tomorrow and washee dishee."

So we just eliminated one meal there, but we slept out on the desert. It was warm and it wasn't bad. The next morning we were there johnny-on-the-spot to

get that meal. After we had breakfast that morning, we asked him if we couldn't come back and wash dishes again. He said, "Yes. You boys nicea boys to come back. But don't you like apple pie?" The Chinese were great on apple pie. So we had a piece of stale old pie that I guess had been on the shelf for quite a while. I never will forget that.

We went to the mill in Goldfield and rustled a job there. They didn't give us a job till about three days later, and all the time the Chinaman was supporting us out there.

Then, when we got a job, we lived in the bunkhouse with the rest of the miners. The mill and the mine were right close together. The ore would come into the mill, and there was a great big grinder that ground the ore. The ore was run on belts. Our job was to oil and clean the belts and keep the mill clean.

I worked in the mines a little while when I was in Goldfield, but I didn't like the dynamite smoke. It would give me headaches, so I said, "I'm never going underground again." The Ventura ranch laid the foundation for me taking up agriculture.

In the evenings in Goldfield, we played baseball. There were a lot of University of Nevada boys there, and we'd talk to them. They had quite an influence on me, I know. They inveigled me to come up to the University of Nevada when I told them I had a little experience in football, they said, "That's just what we want. We want you to come up there and play football."

At that time, we were making three dollars and a half a day working in the mill. That was big money for us, and we ate at the boarding house. I think they charged us a dollar and a half a day for board and room down there. So we were lucky to come out with some money at the end of the summer. I wrote my folks and told them that I was going to the University of Nevada with a bunch of University boys, even though our home was very close to the University of Southern California.

When I got to the University, football season had started, and I got pledged to a local fraternity up there, THPO, which later became SAE. That's an interesting tale. I was there at the time that we petitioned to SAE for a charter. The national fraternity had their annual meeting at Atlanta, Georgia, and at that time we sent a representative from this local chapter. They turned us down due to the fact that they said the Indians in Nevada still had war paint and war feathers. (Laughter) That was due to the fact that we used to play the Stewart Indian School at Carson City.

The next time we made a petition, we had U.S. Senator Key Pittman intercede for us. He happened to be an SAE, I think, from Indiana. He was the Nevada Senator, so he was one that put the deal over for us, and we got our petition, in 1917.

SW: That was during World War I. Did you serve in the military?

CHH: No, I didn't. I was a pipefitter in a shipyard at San Pedro. I worked for the Union Iron Company. They were building ships, and I worked as a steam fitter. Then after the Armistice, I went back to the University.

The way we used to go to the university from Los Angeles was by Pacific Steamship from San Pedro to San Francisco. It was an overnight trip. Then we'd take the S.P. train over to Reno.

SW: Was there a train from Los Angeles to San Francisco?

CHH: Oh yes. But the cheaper way was to go by boat. That was not only a cheaper way but it was an interesting way.

SW: What did you study at the University of Nevada?

CHH: I graduated in Agriculture in 1923. I had taken a course in Smith-Hughes, in Agricultural Instruction. After graduation I didn't know exactly what I was going to do, so I went back to Los Angeles and I finally decided to go up to the Board of Education and see if there was anything in the teaching line.

I happened to meet a man named John Corcoran. I had an introduction to him from another Nevada boy who was teaching school. He gave me a job at Reseda in the San Fernando Valley teaching agriculture. This school was a combined elementary and a junior high school. I taught biology and landscape gardening.

Teaching in Southern California

SW: Was it during that period that you met Leila?

CHH: Yes. She came south to teach, and we had the same supervisor, Mr. Corcoran. One day he asked me if I would be interested in helping a young lady who came down from the north to get her oriented. She taught gardening in the same school. I went down and met her then, and showed her the ropes.

Leila and I would meet at our monthly meetings of the Ag teachers in the Valley.

At that particular time, the San Fernando Valley was just being developed. It was wide open space, but they were dividing it into family farms. The people who lived on these acreages were trying to be self-sustaining. They had a little alfalfa, chickens and rabbits, and they raised their own vegetables. It was kind of a rough deal for a lot of them, but they wanted to invest their money in a home. Many of them worked in the studios in Hollywood.

SW: Were a lot of these families Mexican?

CHH: Not all Mexicans. There were a great many from the middle west. Leila happened to be in an area where there were more Mexicans. My area had very few Mexicans.

SW: Did you teach in several schools?

CHH: I taught in two schools, one in Pacoima and one in Reseda. I taught there for two years, and then I taught two years in John Muir Junior High School in the Los Angeles. We got married right at the end of the spring session at John Muir and came up here to Woodland.

Moves to Yolo County

I stayed here for about two and a half years as foreman on the ranch. Then we got a good man to oversee, Herman Rackwitz. He died of cancer a very short time thereafter, and we got a boy named Orville Wright. He lived here in Woodland and graduated from the high school. We developed him into the foreman while I stayed in the Agricultural office in Woodland. I liked the work. The whole county only had a population of 30,000 people in 1930.

SW: You were hired as a deputy in the Agricultural Commissioner's office in 1930. How did you get that job?

CHH: The State Department of Agriculture made you qualify for that job by taking examinations. I found out just what the regulatory system required and the knowledge that I would have to know in order to qualify for Deputy. It came very easy for me because many of the things I already had studied.

SW: Did you apply for that job because it was the beginning of the Depression?

CHH: Yes. It gave us a monthly income and it helped us over the slump. The children were coming along about that time. My oldest daughter was born in 1929 and a son in '33 and Martha in 1935.

SW: Was Leila helping on the ranch then?

CHH: Yes, Leila was always bookkeeper and in charge of affairs here on the ranch when I was gone. I would help her in the evening and before going to work in the morning. We cooperated with each other.

I took that job in 1930 and I was appointed Agricultural Commissioner in 1936.

Hog Project

SW: When did you and Dr. Hecke start your Hog Project?

CHH: It was about 1933. While I was traveling around the county on regulatory work, I'd contact many farmers. They had lots of stored grain, and we could buy a sack of barley that weighted 100 pounds for fifty cents a sack. We ground the barley with fish meal and alfalfa and made a meal of it to feed the hogs. We got the specifications from the University to build the hog house, and with handymen here, we built it. We were later able to sell an average of about twenty to thirty hogs every month. They were Hampshire and Poland - China cross. Hampshire was black with a white belt, and Poland - China was a good cross.

SW: That project came to an abrupt end when the hog house burned, didn't it?

CHH: Yes. I can't remember exactly when. It was in the late forties.

SW: Leila, you were telling me about the Hog Project. How did it get started?

LHH: Charles was more interested in animals, dairying and hogs, than he was in fruits when we were first married. One of the big fires on the ranch was the burning of our big fruit packing house. So, when that burned down, Dad and Charles decided to go into the hog business.

Elmer Hughes of the Animal Husbandry Department gave us specifications for a real up-to-date hog establishment. We built a big building with cement floors. Upstairs there was an apartment for the men who took care of the hogs, and below was the place where we ground our own feed and mixed it according to the specifications from the University.

There were about fifteen or twenty stalls for the sows to furrow. There were little projections on the sides of the stalls that would hold the little pigs so the sows wouldn't lay on them. The mothers would weigh two, three hundred pounds and they were so heavy that they would crush many of their young otherwise.

The sows had many little pigs in each litter. That was the time under Henry Wallace when you could only raise so many. So we had to kill off about half of each litter.

Every morning the sows and the little pigs went outside in little individual pens. All the stalls were washed with big two-inch fire hoses and fresh straw was put in, and then they were allowed to come back in. All the offal went into a big pit. It was used for fertilizer on the ranch.

SW: That project ended when the building burned down, didn't it?

LHH: Yes, that was our third big fire on the ranch. When the hog building burned, we didn't go back into the hog business. It wasn't too profitable, and this was essentially a fruit ranch.

County Agricultural Commissioner

SW: Charles, getting back to your job in the Agricultural Commissioner's office. You were appointed Commissioner in 1936 and then two years later you were president of the Sacramento Valley Agricultural Commissioner's Association. What was that group?

CHH: There was an association of Agricultural Commissioners. Each county had an Agricultural Commissioner. Some of the Commissioners are just Commissioners, but I had also had Weights and Measures and Animal Control under me. Animal Control took in control of the predatory animals in the western part of the county as well as the animal shelter.

Dog Control

It was an interesting thing about the dog control. They used to have dog control very early in this county. When I was appointed, why every one of the elected constables in the various districts was supposed to collect dog licenses. But nobody was behind them to enforce this.

I can remember that the delivery men used to put the bread out in bread boxes on Main Street in the early morning before the stores opened. There was a hue and cry because dogs would come along there, and people were thinking about sanitary conditions. So dog control was switched then to the Health Department. Then a bunch of women came up to the Board of Supervisors and screamed to high

heaven that they didn't want the Health Officer to handle their babies and to handle dogs at the same time. Since I was an appointed officer, they called me up one day and said, "Hardy, we've got a job for you." You may not like it, but we're going to give you the responsibility of licensing the dogs in Yolo County."

SW: When was this?

CHH: About 1939. I took the job over and hired a man by the name of Jack Mendez. He was a Portuguese fellow who could talk the Spanish language. The Board limited me to just one man and we had the entire county.

I never knew what a pound looked like, but I knew I wanted some pens. A man named Del Fenton and I got together and we built a pound out by the County Hospital. I never will forget, it cost us $2,500 to build that pound.

SW: How many dogs could you hold?

CHH: I think we had, as I recall, about ten pens. We mixed the males and females together. There was a crusade against this about the time I was ready to leave office. I kept telling the Supervisors that they were bound to be under a law suit if they didn't have better conditions at the pound. Finally, just as I was leaving, they built a pound and it cost them about $250,000.

That was the beginning of the dog pound. We kept adding on different men -- for eastern Yolo County and finally for the City of Davis. The City of Woodland decided that they wanted to get in on the dog business, and they built their own pound out here at the old city dump. I was so tickled when they did that.

Davis had its own dog control for about two years. Then they threw the thing all onto the county because that was too hot a potato for them. Some of those college professors certainly resented the way the dogs were handled by the county. We just didn't have enough men to handle it right. They came over and tried to get the Supervisors to do something. But they said, "Davis, if you want a pound, you get an ordinance and you can have it in the city limits."

Considering everything, I think we did a remarkable job. During the war years we brought in a good many dogs that the Army took away from us to use in the South Pacific. They used to come to the pound and take the dogs down to San Rafael where they trained them for guard dogs and to smell out Japanese soldiers.

Rodent and Weed Control

SW: Didn't you also have the responsibility for rodent control?

CHH: Yes. Rodent and Weed Control, they called it. When I first came here, every road was full of rodents, squirrels and rats. They did a lot of destructive work. So I had a plan to go after them on the county roads. We scattered treated barley along the road near their burrows, not more than a handful at a time. A squirrel has a membraneous-lined cheek pouch. The strychnine is absorbed through that membraneous lining when the squirrel pouches the seeds and carries them down to its hole.

We manufactured our own poison. In as much as there was no other place that was dispensing rat or squirrel poison, we'd mix it up ourselves here in Woodland. The Agricultural Commissioner was supposed to mix it up, bag it and sell it. We sold it to the farmers in those days, and they still do today.

SW: Did you have any problems with poisoning children or sheep?

CHH: No, even though at that particular time they did herd sheep up the county roads. No problems ever entered my office at all because I warned the boys. We'd scatter the grain loose enough so that the pheasants would pick up only one or two kernels and then they'd move onto something else. We used to have lots of pheasant here, and it never affected them at all. A lot of the naturalists thought that we were poisoning the pheasants, but we weren't.

SW: Was the poison effective with the squirrels?

CHH: Yes. We were also effective with blackbird control. We used poisoned rice along the levees because the blackbirds used to come in there and just devour the rice fields.

Among the pests that we worked to control were rats. They were very difficult to get. I can remember on Main Street in Woodland those bakeries and stores were just overrun with them. It was really the responsibility of the Health Department to control rats in the city, but they didn't take an active interest because at that time they had just a doctor in the Health Department.

In the country we tried various ways to get rid of the rats. We tried electrocuting them, and we tried poisoning them. Finally they got poisons called Red Squill and Thalium that were very effective on rats. We used to put them in places where the other animals couldn't get it. Rats could go in tunnels like a pipe or something, and we'd put the poison in there. They've outlawed the use of Thalium in recent years, but we thought it was a wonderful thing then.

SW: What do they use now?

CHH: They have now what they call a Warfarin Compound. They found that cows in a dairy community back in Wisconsin were dying when they put them out on clover pasture. They found that there was a yellow mildew that grew on this clover that would make the cows bleeders; that is, they bled internally. So at that point the University of Wisconsin developed what they called Warfarin. There are other proprietory names given to it now. It's a fungus growth that causes the rat to be an internal bleeder. The rats don't know what's killing them, but they're dying all the time they're feeding on it. That's what we're using today. If a person ever gets too much of it, they can stop it with vitamin K.

SW: Are rats still a problem here?

CHH: Yes. They will always be a problem. Rats have always lived with men. On the ranch here I have to put out poisoned bait constantly. I always try to put it out after the crops are harvested and just before a rain because the rats seek shelter and warmth at that particular time.

Predatory Animal Control

We also worked to control predatory animals. Bobcats and coyotes were bothering the sheepmen and turkey men in the western part of the hills. There was always an argument when I came up for budgeting for money for the trappers because the people in eastern Yolo and along the river didn't get any advantages from that type of work.

SW: What did you do to control coyotes and bobcats?

CHH: We hired trappers who trapped them with steel traps. The State and the Federal government and the county had an arrangement with the trappers. In Yolo County there were about 40,000 acres of government land, and the State contracted with the Federal government for one extra trapper for us. The county had two trappers in Winters and in the Esparto district, and the third trapper was trapping in the upper part of the Capay Valley. They were to protect the sheepmen and their interests by trapping.

Weed Control

SW: Wasn't weed control another of your responsibilities?

CHH: Yes. Weed control got started just as I came to Yolo County as a deputy. It seems that in those days they thrashed grain, sacked the grain and dropped it off onto trucks. During that sacking there were a good many problems with Puncture Vine burrs. The men that would load those sacks onto a wagon or truck would get scratched. Also, the automobile tires of that time weren't as good as they are today, and those burrs would cause a slow leak.

The burrs were on a weed called Tribulus terristis, or Puncture Vine. Apparently this Puncture Vine came in from Texas on the wool of sheep that came into Mullen's Stations. Frank Bullard and other sheepmen would bring in herds of sheep for their Rambouillet flocks here. They found the weed primarily at the railroad unloading places. It was always something that the wool people didn't want, so that started the program of Weed Control.

In those days they used just ordinary diesel oil to kill the Puncture Vine. Later on a fellow by the name of Warren Westgate came to town and he brought in what they called Cynox General. We mixed the diesel oil with the Cynox General and found that the kill was much better.

SW: How did you kill the weeds along the county roads?

CHH: We used a spray truck. When we found weeds in a farmer's field and he wouldn't take care of them, after giving him due notice, we'd put on an abatement. We'd go in and spray the weeds ourselves and charge him for the work. In other words, it would be a lien on his property if he didn't pay the County.

SW: Was that a County ordinance?

CHH: No, it was a State law. Then, in order to be reasonable, we'd give the farmers plenty of time and try to work with them and not use a big stick. After all, we were their public servants.

SW: Did you do this because weeds would cut into the farmers' crops?

CHH: Very definitely, and that would be unprofitable for the farmers, especially after they began to develop the certified seed here in this county. Certified seed was supposed to be genetically pure and free of all weed seeds or foreign material. If weed seeds were in there, the seed was no longer certifiable. Then they could just sell the crop for feed, not for seed.

SW: So, weed control was a very important function of your office, wasn't it?

CHH: Yes. I don't know whether you know "Doc" Robbins of Davis. He came here from Colorado and was doing experimental work with weeds. The State Department of Agriculture had a man by the name of Walter Ball. Those two men were very weed conscious, and they kept prodding us Agricultural Commissioners always about weed control. They didn't want anyone to bring in weeds like Canadian thistle and other types of noxious weeds that weren't acceptable here in California.

Pest Control

We also were on the look-out for insect pests. You see, at that particular time, we could pretty well control the insect pests that came into California. Automobile traffic wasn't too extensive, not like it is today. And for natural protection, we had the ocean on one side, the mountains on the other, and the desert to the south.

The State of California was part of the Eleven Western States Quarantine Board, and everybody tried to work together, even the Hawaiian Islands. We were trying to protect ourselves against pests like the Japanese beetle that developed in the eastern states. They infested the cherry trees along the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. We found out that insects hitchiked on airplanes. So naturally we had inspectors at the airports here to check on the planes. Later they did away with inspection on arrival. Now they check the planes at the other end and fumigate them before take-off. In the Hawaiian Islands they fumigate the planes with people in them against citrus white fly and Mediterranean fruit fly. I think they use pyrethium for fumigating. It's not bad. They used to use that as fly spray.

An interesting thing about pest control had to do with tomatoes. It happened about 1930. It happened that there was a farmer who used to have a little tomato patch on the other side of the Davis depot. He had about fifteen, sixteen acres which he had sprayed by airplane.

At that particular time the pest control operators that used airplanes used the old Army jennies they used in World War I. They used a lot of baling wire, and their sprayers were a homemade deal.

In those days it was customary for the college professors to board the Oregonian at the Davis Y to go down to Berkeley. One morning, oh, I'd say about 6:30, they were getting ready to board that Oregonian, and this plane was diving over the depot. Calcium arsenate dropped all over these five college professors. When they got to Berkeley, they immediately contacted Dr. Robert Sproul, the president of the University. Dr. Sproul contacted the Governor. The Governor

contacted the Director of Agriculture, who was Mr. Brock at that particular time. Mr. Brock contacted our agriculture department, and we went down to see what had happened.

We found that the operator had had an old jenny and in tripping the venturi tube, or hopper, it stuck. That's what gave the professors the whitewash of calcium arsenate. That was the insecticide used to control tomato worms.

I remember we had a conference after that in the State Chamber of Commerce building, where the first rules and regulations were promulgated for the control of pest control operators.

SW: What happened to the professors?

CHH: It didn't hurt them any. They could dust it off their clothes. But they were terribly indignant about it. I never will forget that. It was the talk of the town for quite a while.

That reminds me of some problems we had with bees. Yellow star thistle used to be thick along the county roads. The beemen claimed that the area along the roads where the yellow star thistle grew was bee property. When these airplanes would dust the fields, calcium arsenate would get on the yellow star thistle and it would kill the bees. There was a beeman by the name of John Eckhardt. He was the champion of the beemen. He was just constantly trying to get all the necessary information about these pest control operators to bring it before the Legislature. Oh, he was death on pest control operators! Yet these airplanes were a quick way for farmers to get over a large area.

They finally did get regulations to make them keep the dust only on the crops that were supposed to be dusted and not on other land. That was the beginning of the pest control regulations.

The crop dusters did a lot of damage in the early days. Calcium arsenate has a metallic flavor, and lots of times cattle used to reach through the barbed wire fence and eat grass on the other side that had been sprayed. And, by golly, I'd go out and see maybe five or six head of nice beef cattle dead. So that would institute a law suit between the farmer that had the loss and the airplane operator and my office, because I was supposed to regulate him. These operators would always get insurance from Lloyds of London. None of the other companies would insure them. There were a good many lawsuits between crop dusters and the farmers during the time I was in office.

Crop dusting evidently was a very lucrative job at that time because I remember a good many times if conditions weren't just right and one man would refuse to fly, farmers used to come up and tell him, "If you don't do it, I'll go and get this other fellow to do it." So it made for a lot of competition between them.

SW: Were some of these men trained as wartime pilots?

CHH: That's exactly it. These were Depression times, and they were looking for anything to do. Goodness sakes, some of those operators would have goggles on, and when they got out of the plane, they would be just whitewashed themselves. I saw them many times like that. It didn't seem to bother them too much. They'd just wash up.

SW: Was the regulation of these operators part of your responsibility?

CHH: Yes. We were the enforcing officers.

SW: How could you enforce the regulations?

CHH: A little later in the forties, I had a man who knew how to fly. He is the Agricultural Commissioner today, Herb Chandler. We had him scouting. We rented a plane here in the county to go and check on these operators. We could fly down to Clarksburg and be there in just a few minutes. Or we'd be in western or northern Yolo County or up in the Knights Landing area.

That operation lasted about one and a half seasons, and then the Supervisors found that the cost of insurance was so high that they discontinued it. We had to find other means of enforcement.

SW: I don't suppose your automobiles were very fast in those days.

CHH: No, and we didn't have two-way radios in the automobiles at that time, not until the last four or five years I was in office. Then we could call from Woodland down to Clarksburg and tell them there was an inspection to be made there.

Produce Inspection

We'd use those two-way radios in other lines of duty, too, such as Fruit, Nuts and Vegetables inspection. They would call from Clarksburg if they wanted a certification there for a load of vegetables going north. Fruit and vegetables that were shipped had to have certificates that they were in standard containers, that they were admissible. Our men would inspect to see that there would be no deceptive packaging. In other words, that a box didn't have nice, beautiful fruit on top and poor quality fruit underneath. They used to check at the border stations to see if the shipments had had the County inspection. If not, they made inspections there.

SW: Did your men do the inspecting of the produce that was going out of the county?

CHH: Yes. That was brought on due to the fact that our markets then were 3,000 miles away, and we knew that if we had good produce here to ship to the east, it would be acceptable over every state that didn't do that inspecting.

SW: What kind of things did you inspect?

CHH: The first things they'd ship were the early apricots. They'd come on about the last part of May and last until about the tenth of June. We had to see that the apricots had the right maturity. Then when pears came along, they had to have the right maturity before we'd allow them to be picked. So we used to go down and test them and give the high sign that the fruit was acceptable. Then, with the grapes for wineries, we'd have to see that the sugar content was up, to at least twenty-one and twenty-two parts.

SW: How did you do that?

CHH: We had these hydrometers. They'd take a bunch of grapes right out of the vine and squeeze them. Then they'd take an ordinary flour sack, squeeze the juice

through it out into a little basin and put it into a beaker. They had a little gauge there that would tell the sugar content.

SW: Would your men do this out in the fields?

CHH: Yes. My men would be right down there in the packing sheds to oversee the fruit, that it was ripe, packed uniformly, and properly labeled.

SW: You didn't have enough men to go to all the farms, did you?

CHH: No. We did a spot inspection.

Nursery Inspection

We also had Nursery Inspection. We'd check on the nurseries to see that the trees that they sold were disease-free and didn't have root knot or nematodes.

SW: What kind of training did you require of your men?

CHH: In order to be an inspector, you had to pass a State Inspector's examination.

SW: Would the inspectors be college graduates?

CHH: Not necessarily. Lots of times we couldn't find them. At that particular time we'd educate them ourselves, men that had a little agricultural background, probably farmers' boys. We'd send them out with another inspector to find out what it was all about. We'd train them in one thing, like weed control. Then they'd step into another division, and then they'd pass the examination. They also studied the Agriculture Code.

Another job we had was Warehouse Inspection.

SW: Would you tell me what you did?

CHH: The inspectors took a probe (a probe is a kind of a long tube) and inserted it into sacks of grain. Then they examined a sample of the grain to see what condition the grain was in, whether there were insect pests in it or noxious weeds. That was the idea.

SW: How much grain would the probe take out?

CHH: Possibly a pound and a half. Lots of times we'd send it over to the State Seed Laboratory for their final inspection and analysis. But we did the actual work.

SW: Would you do this warehouse inspection on a spot-check basis?

CHH: Yes, all over the county.

SW: Did some of those sacks of grain go by boat out of the port of Sacramento?

CHH: Yes. At first they sacked them out. Later they could use principally bulk and very little was shipped by sack. Storage silos were put up by Cargill, a big company that headquartered, I think, in Minneapolis. David Adams of Woodland

had a similar arrangement. When boats would come in at the port of Sacramento, our quarantine inspector boarded them to check for not only plant pests but any meat or meat products taken on shore. This was to guard against Hoof and Mouth Disease from foreign countries.

SW: How was most of the grain that was grown in Yolo County shipped out of the county?

CHH: It was sent out by rail and trucks. At one time, we even imported grain here in the county. We had lots of livestock, and the Commodity Credit Corporation used to bring in carloads of grain. We'd inspect the grain for noxious weed seeds or insect pests. Canadian thistle was one of the seeds that I can recall that we looked for. The farmers would get the grain in bulk and take it to their farms. That was during the time that we had every warehouse in the county filled up.

SW: When was that?

CHH: I just don't remember. I think it was in the early fifties. We had a surplus of grain all over the United States. It was very cheap and the Commodity Credit Corporation wanted to get rid of it, so they made it readily available to the farmers.

There was another thing that was kind of interesting. During that particular time we had a regulation that all meat had to be inspected. But we were finding that the farmers were out killing their own cattle and they were slipping the meat in the back door of these meat markets without being government inspected. Eventually we caught two farmers at three o'clock in the morning and stopped this.

SW: What were some of the other functions of your office?

Apiary Inspection

CHH: Well, we had Apiary Inspection. We tried to inspect bees for American Foulbrood. We had a part-time bee inspector named Charlie Justus. He did two or three things. He was a Rodent and Weed man, and also a Bee Inspector.

We used to have different diseases on sugar beets like sugar beet nematode that we had to check out. It forms little white eggs on the sugar beets. They used to have a quarantine on shipping those beets out of Yolo County. Believe it or not, they'd ship them down the Sacramento River and refine them in Orange County. That was only for a few years. I think the American Sugar Crystal Co. had a factory down there, and then they built one here at Clarksburg.

SW: That disease must have made quite an impact on the growing of sugar beets.

CHH: Yes, it eliminated growing sugar beets in a lot of places. As a matter of fact, I had an experience with sugar beet nematode here on the ranch. We used to take the spent lime that they used at the factory and put it on our own field here in order to loosen up this heavy ground. We found we got a nice dose of sugar beet nematode with the lime, which eliminated us from growing sugar beets for two to five years. Then we could replant.

SW: Did your office cooperate with UCD in controlling plant diseases and pests?

CHH: Yes.

SW: Did you go on to UCD property to do your inspections?

CHH: Yes. We went right on to University property to check grapevines there. We worked with Dr. Winkler that still lives in Davis. In those days they were afraid of a disease, phylloxera. They used to have to dip the roots of the grapevines in hot water for a minute and a half at 100 degrees. That would sterilize them before they could ship them out.

The University was experimenting with different varieties of grapevines. Shipments of vines came in through the Post Office from all over the world. We used to check the shipments to see that they were free of insect pests and diseases.

After a few years, the State Department made a regulation to have the inspection of things coming from out of state in the nurseries of the state instead of in the Post Office. Many things bypassed the quarantine stations coming into the county. They'd come in by freight, and we'd have to go to the freight depot and inspect them. Egyptian moth used to come in on furniture from the New England states, or on tombstones or granite for markers in graveyards. The stones would come in with egg masses on them. They wouldn't take care of them back east, so we had to check them as they were unloaded from the freight cars.

SW: Did they inspect moving vans too?

CHH: Yes, they did that. They got pretty slack on that, especially inspection of interstate vans. We just looked for the principal pests that bothered agriculture. Now, cockroaches are a household pest, but they don't bother agriculture.

SW: The functions of your office were mainly related to agriculture. Weren't they?

CHH: Yes, primarily. Although city folks used to use our services too. I can remember that we used to have termite inspection. When we weren't doing anything else, we could be called in voluntarily by people that wanted to know whether there were termites in their house. Then the professional termite people came in and took that off our hands.

Egg Inspection

Another thing was Egg Inspection. The Legislature threw that into our department. We'd go and inspect eggs in stores to see that they were marked properly, that the size and weight were correct so that the consumer would have only fresh eggs. In fact, the egg people wanted us to do that because they wanted to sell more eggs. If a housewife opened an egg that had blood in it that stopped her from buying eggs right there. So they launched a big program with the State Legislature to put in a regulation to govern the sale of eggs in the county. We used to do candling of eggs.

SW: Did you actually use a candle?

CHH: No, we used an egg candler. The egg was put in a box with an electric light bulb below it, and you can detect inside of the egg. You can see the chalaza and the yolk, and you can see if there's any blood. Also you can weigh them to determine whether the eggs are classed as large, medium or extra large. They still do candling of eggs in the stores. They spot check.

SW: Are there regulation sizes for the labels of eggs?

CHH: Yes. They have to be labeled properly on the container. You can't take small eggs and mark them "Large" eggs.

SW: Wasn't another of your functions spraying the shade trees along county roads?

CHH: That's right. We had Elm Leaf Beetle control throughout the county. The county took care of the city trees too. The Elm Leaf Beetle is noticeable when the leaves first come out in May. They skeletonize the leaves, and they defoliate the tree.

I contracted with a man to do the spraying. He would spend maybe two weeks spraying those trees. They first started out using calcium arsenate, and then they had other materials that were not as dangerous.

SW: Did you also go after mistletoe along county roads?

CHH: No. Mistletoe was something that was just out of control. We didn't have the forces to handle it. If you go along the Sacramento River, the sycamores and all those trees are just filthy with mistletoe.

Weights and Measures

SW: You were also Sealer of Weights and Measures. Did you check the scales on the ranches to see that they measured accurately?

CHH: No. We checked big commercial scales and during the harvest season, those big tomato truck scales. We also checked the individual scales in the stores so they would weigh accurately. You can see them today with a big sticker on them. If they were weighing inaccurately, we put on a red tag and made the store take them down until the scale man could come over and repair them.

The idea was protection for the consumer.

Then, too, we'd inspect the amount of gasoline they'd pump in the gasoline stations. We used to have a five-gallon can, and we'd have a fast check and a slow check to see that the comsumer got the right number of gallons.

In the early days they used to have little tanks of oil of different sizes, SA 10, 21, 30 and 40. If you went in and told the station attendant that you wanted SA 20 and he gave you 40, that was a violation of the law. If we were suspicious that something was wrong with the way they were handling their oil, we'd bring in a trap truck. In other words, they had an automobile that looked like anybody else's automobile, but it had a separate reservoir. I put one of my inspectors in the trap truck. I wouldn't go myself because they would know me. They would go and order SA 20 or 30, and they would take that oil to the petroleum laboratory to determine whether they were giving what they asked for.

SW: Was the petroleum laboratory in Sacramento?

CHH: Yes, at the State Department of Agriculture.

There was quite a little bit of skulduggery going on in that day. Lots of times those fellows in the stations would take old secondhand oil and mix it with good oil in order to get more volume. When you'd pour the oil in your car from a scoop, you couldn't tell whether it was good or not. When it got in your engine, it got black anyway. Or, lots of times you'd find water in the oil after a good rain. They just got sloppy giving it out. When they saw a license from some other state, they'd gyp people that were traveling through. You'd be surprised at what they did. It was during the Depression times when they were trying to make a fast buck. It was hard to keep up with them. They were pretty sharp.

Lots of times they had these big tanks, and they'd pass the regular gasoline into the supreme and so on, back and forth. We used to take gasoline samples over to the Petroleum Laboratory.

SW: Do they still do that?

CHH: Yes, they do. They keep checking. The big oil stations didn't do it. It was these little independent boys that did it most of the time. They had to buy their gasoline from little refineries down in Kern County, bring it up here, and just dump it in their tank. You never knew what you were getting. If you wanted supreme, you might be just getting regular. Or, they would mix the two together in order to charge a cent or two more for the supreme. So, we had to have somebody to check on that problem. I don't say they all did it. It was just a few that did.

SW: Didn't you also go into the grocery stores and check the commodities in packages?

CHH: Oh yes. We checked the package commodities to see if they packed deceptively. It seemed like there was too much regulation, but you just had to cut out that skulduggery. We were supposed to protect the consumer. That was our job.

After I left the office, they used to have lady shoppers go around and buy meat to see if they got the exact weight. One of my men always went along. You always had to have a witness, you see. After you swear out a warrant or a complaint, you have to take it up to the District Attorney, and he would cross-examine you to see whether you had legal grounds for a warrant for their arrest. But they never did very much. All the judge would do would be to put them on probation.

SW: Did they fine them?

CHH: Yes, they did.

We used to go in scales houses over there. Sometimes they would operate without a weighmaster's license. They would have to have a license, and if they didn't we'd close them until they got the license.

I can remember one day during the war years. George Dahl was my Weights and Measures deputy. A Sacramento contractor had a contract out there at the Davis Airport for the Army Corps of Engineers. He got so much a ton for hauling

dirt, just ordinary dirt. We went by there one day, and we noticed that the trucks were moving on the scale and off so fast that no human being could possibly weigh their loads. So both of us went around in back and we saw the government inspector sitting in there. So we went in and weighed a few of the trucks and checked the weights against the receipts that the inspector had made out previously. They didn't tally at all.

We went to the District Attorney and told him what we had seen. This was a government job, and we hauled in a contractor from Sacramento and a state inspector too. This caused quite a furor. The Army Engineers came over and said, "How in the world did you and George ever find this out?" I don't know what they did to that fellow's contract, but they made him adjust it. The District Attorney went along with me, and all they fined him was $500. A misdemeanor is what it was.

SW: But at least he stopped doing it. That was something.

CHH: Oh, we stopped him. We had many of those skirmishes.

SW: The work that your office did was the local, on-the-spot carrying out of mainly state regulations, wasn't it?

CHH: Yes, indeed. There were state laws, and the State Department of Agriculture made the regulations as to how you were to enforce those laws. The State would send supervisors over to this county as well as other counties to enforce uniformity.

SW: Do you think having local people do the inspections worked pretty well?

CHH: It worked very well. Yes, indeed. I knew the farmers, and I knew the circumstances. We used to be able to call them in our office and just tell them what they were doing wrong and ask them to mend their ways. If they didn't, we'd have to bring out a warrant or complaint against them.

SW: The farmers must have trusted you pretty much, didn't they?

CHH: Oh, yes. I got so I knew them real well. And I wasn't afraid to go in after work and tell them if I thought they weren't doing something correctly. There wasn't too much trouble.

In those days we used to work until noon on Saturday, and we worked until our job was done. We didn't have an eight-hour day then. A good many times I used to come home at seven o'clock at night. There weren't many vacations then either.

For example, Buster Giovanetti out at the Half Moon Produce used to ship a lot of honeydews. Many times they'd be shipping produce out at night. I used to go out there myself and write up a certificate after I had looked at the truckload of melons to see that they passed. They couldn't get across the Border Quarantine Station unless they had that certificate. If they didn't have the certificate, the Quarantine boys used to break open the boxes and the shippers didn't want that. They didn't want any delay. So we gave them that service as long as they were taxpayers.

Civilian Defense

CHH: I'll tell you about one of my other duties there during the war years. Civilian Defense. I remember that during the months before Pearl Harbor, the Supervisors passed an ordinance to organize civil defense in this county. It laid on the shelf and the Supervisors didn't do anything more about it.

But Monday after Pearl Harbor, everybody wanted protection. One morning about eleven o'clock a big crowd of people came to the Courthouse. You couldn't hardly get into the building! They thought that the Supervisors were the ones to do something about it.

Anyway, I got a call from the Chairman of the Board to come up to the Board Room. He was Bill Russell from Davis. I noticed that all the department heads were there. He said, "All you department heads come in our little anteroom." So we all sat around there, and I sat there as innocent as could be. The District Attorney came up and said, "Gentlemen, I make a motion that we appoint Charles Hardy to head up our Defense Council." I got up on my feet and told that I was as ill-prepared as anybody in the county to take on a job that was as strenuous as that and as important as that.

"Oh, you can handle it. We'll help you." So they just said, "You're it." Somebody seconded the motion, and another fellow said, "Let's have a vote." And it was just 1-2-3, just like that!

SW: You were railroaded.

CHH: Yep. So we all met down in my office and we planned what we were to do. We decided that Dr. Woolsey would be the Medical Officer, and a fellow by the name of Rod Degner from Winters was going to be the deputy over there in Winters. And George Cranston here in Woodland.

Warnie Norton, the Farm Advisor, was in on the deal too. He was the one that put the job on me, I know that. He was in touch with all the different farm centers that could be used for relocation. At that particular time we thought sure that they were going to bomb the Bay Bridge. We figured that there would be a big influx of people from the Bay Area who wanted to locate here. The Farm Advisor was supposed to get places for them to stay, to be able to cook, and to take care of themselves. I appointed another person to go around to each warehouse and find out what they had so we could call on them for supplies.

We sent out word through the papers. We wanted to know everybody with a particular skill. We called for people that were mechanics, electricians and plumbers. Volunteers came in and registered.

We sandbagged the Courthouse on the south side up to the second story window with sandbags, and we had a filter center in the basement of the Courthouse. We called it the filter center where everyone had one central place to call. Then we could give out information from there. The manager of the Pacific Telephone was in charge of installing that filter center.

We used to have our meetings there. Everyday there was a directive sheet given to me about what was planned. I remember calling on these college professors for help.

Just about that time rationing came in. Sugar, tires, gasoline, and, as I recall, meat all came in together. So I went before the Board of Supervisors and they gave me money to hire a lady by the name of Louise Gidossi. She was the hired secretary and she started in to work.

Well, let me tell you one thing about the rationing stamps that was interesting. I had offices in different parts of the county -- in Davis, West Sacramento, Broderick, Winters, Esparto.

Over in Winters, I had a man that was deputized. His name was Amos Roath and he was a City Councilman. I had him in charge of giving out the rationing stamps. We had 10,00 stamps there, and one night somebody came through the attic, broke a great big piece of ceiling and stole all those 10,000 stamps. The old man, Amos, came into my office, sweat coming down his face. He was worried stiff. He couldn't imagine what they were going to do to us. I took him over to the Sheriff's office and we called up the F.B.I. We threw the whole thing in their lap.

But it just got to the point where Amos said, "I just can't take it any longer." So I appointed another fellow by the name of Musgrove in his place and he got along fine with the rationing problems.

SW: I understand that one of the things you were supposed to do was the obliteration of air markers. What was that?

CHH: They thought maybe that if the Japanese ever came in, they would be oriented by different landmarks, so we had to obliterate them. Like on the Cal Aggie Water Tower, they had "CA" on them. And for the Hotel Woodland, we could let them only use "Hotel". The Hersheys had a warehouse on Main Street and 113, and it had the word "Woodland" on the roof. We had to get the Supervisors to give us enough money to buy paint, and volunteers went up and obliterated "Woodland".

SW: Did you also have blackout regulations?

CHH: Oh yes. The Sheriff, Forrest Monroe, was in charge of the blackouts, so he had deputies check on the lights on the barns and houses. As a matter of fact, we had blackout curtains here that we shut in the night to shut out the light.

Finally we got instructions from the Mather Air Force Field that we'd have to set up lookouts. So we appointed another person to be in charge of establishing these lookouts.

SW: Was that for spotting planes?

CHH: Yes. We had a lookout twenty-four hours a day. In other words, we'd have to report any planes we saw. We'd just telephone to the filter station at Mather Field and they had a big chart there. Every time a phone call would come in, they'd pinpoint where we'd spotted these planes. We didn't know that while we were doing the lookouts, they were training those fliers. They wanted to give them an assignment so they wouldn't go up there and have just a joy ride. We would have to point where they were so the officers knew where they were. We used to have a big tankhouse on the ranch here in the field and they'd come over and make believe that they were bombing that. Then they'd circle and leave. That was all it amounted to.

We also had to go before the Board of Supervisors to get sirens. We had sirens on the old hotel in Woodland. We had one in Knights Landing, one in Davis and one in Winters. If an alert came in, we could set these sirens to warn the people of a possible air raid.

The only big scare that we had was when I had to take my committee down near Bolinas Bay. The Army sent a truck down. We actually saw bodies out there in the water. The Army frightened us so we would keep alert.

In the early stages of the war, I think we had something like 1200 Japanese living here in the county, especially down in the lower end of the county where they farmed asparagus and row crops. In Clarksburg area they had some Japanese too. They were talking to Tokyo every night, see. Our F.B.I, men at the filter station did the checking. They could see under the floors of their houses the ammunition they stored. If the Japanese troops had landed here, those Japanese would have been the pointers. Then there were some that we had spotted that were the Black Dragons. They were really the leaders. So instead of sending them to Tule Lake, we sent them back to South Dakota.

One night there was a big truck accident at Yolo and I went out with the Highway Patrolman about the time it was over. There were all the hams and bacons and choice pieces of meat that we couldn't get. They were sending them up to Tule Lake to the relocation center. The refrigerator truck just tipped over, and my Portugee pound man (he could smell more darn things going on) was out there loading them in his pound wagon.

Down at Vallejo over the shipyards they had about 200 captive balloons there on cables up in the air. The Japanese also released little balloons about four feet high with phosphorous cards on them. They'd land in the grain fields, the sun would hit them, and they'd start fires. The currents must come this way because up in the Dunnigan area there was one or two phosphorous cards found. The firemen up there told me that. I never saw one.

The Battle of Midway was the terminal point of the whole thing. Just as soon as the Battle was over, why those captive balloons all vanished, and my whole organization just wilted. People felt the danger was over, and I couldn't get anybody to do any more for civilian defense.

During the war Mrs. Hardy was a godsend to me. She used to answer the telephone day and night when I was home, and she let me sleep. After the thing was all over, I went to the hospital for two weeks. I was exhausted.

It was just the petty complaints. You can't imagine how many minor complaints would come along. Everybody was on edge all the time. Then too, I was trying to carry on my work at the office. And when you're in an office of that type, you're a nursemaid for all your help. You hear all their trials and tribulations and try to solve them the best you can.

SW: You certainly were being kept busy! I suppose that after the war was over, your office had even more to do.

CHH: Oh yes.

SW: Thank you, Charles. That was really interesting. One last word. Didn't you retire in 1963 after thirty-three years in that office?

CHH: Yes. There was a very nice ceremony when I retired. There was quite a crowd there that evening out at the Fairgrounds. Dr. Tufts presented me with a great big graduation diploma and so forth. Jim Wilson was the master of ceremonies, and it was really a hilarious evening. Every time I'd get up to speak, Jim would knock me down. He said, "This is your party but you're not to say anything." They had a lot of fun with me, joshing and all about things I did that they remembered.

Daughter Charlotte's Comments

SW: Charlotte, I have enjoyed talking with your father. He is a charming man.

CHJ: Yes, he is. He's a dear.

SW: When I talked to Herb Chandler last week, I was interested to see him because he had worked with your father for so many years. He has great respect for your father.

CHJ: You see, my dad brought him up as kind of a protege, and I think that was why he likes him so much. He's awfully good to my dad still.

SW: In the conversations that I've had with people who have been acquainted with your father for a long time, I get the impression that he has been exceedingly well-liked, very capable, and he was always being asked to do things.

CHJ: Oh yes. During World War II he was Chairman of the County Defense Council. He was out every single night until eleven or midnight, and the phone was by his plate at the dinner table. As I said, he might just as well have gone to war. I don't think the pressures would have been any greater, because he was carrying on the defense of the county plus his other job as Agricultural Commissioner.

It was difficult too, I think, for my father to live with a person like my grandfather, who was very demanding. His word was law and you did his way or nobody else's. I have great respect for my dad that he was able to be himself and yet live under that.

SW: It can't always have been easy.

CHJ: No. It certainly was not easy. It was very difficult.

SW: Thank you for sharing some of your impressions of your family, Charlotte. It has been a pleasure talking to you.

Charles Hardy's Successor

We talked to Herb Chandler, the present Yolo County Agricultural Commissioner. Mr. Chandler was appointed to this position when Charles Hardy retired in 1963.

SW: Mr. Chandler, I'd like to know a bit more about Charles Hardy. When did you go to work for him?

HC: June 5, 1946.

SW: Did you apply for that job or did Charles know you and offer you the job?

HC: Charles knew of me, and he knew me when I lived on the ranch just south of him. We had no close contact through the war years. When I came back home after the war, I went to Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo.

I was looking for a summer job, and I wrote to the Yolo County Department of Agriculture, not specifically Charles Hardy, asking if they had summer work. Charles wrote back and said, "Yes," and consequently I got a summer job. At that time they were having some problems with pesticides and they asked if I would stay on for a while. That "some while" has now turned into thirty-four years.

I started working in Bees, and also that summer I started checking tomato plants for nematodes. That was just the real start of tomatoes coming into Yolo County.

SW: Charles has told me a great deal about the functions of the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Do you remember some of the jobs he was particularly concerned with?

HC: Ground squirrels have always been a great problem. When Charles was here, he used to organize the farmers into squirrel drives. For instance, we took the Capay Valley from about Brooks north all the way to the county line. We broke the farmers up into small groups of three to five, and we would meet up there on a Saturday with probably a couple hundred farmers. They were all assigned a location, and they took off for the day in old cars, on horseback or on foot, carrying poisoned grain in sacks and spreading it out in front of the squirrel holes.

The county normally would donate the poisoned barley. Normally in one day's time, we'd put out about a ton of poisoned grain. You must remember that we'd only put out about a teaspoonful of poisoned grain in front of a hole. So when you put out a ton in one day, that's a lot of holes, a lot of people and a lot of teaspoons. I've seen the time when you'd go back a few hours later to where you'd just poisoned and you could pick up two, three hundred dead squirrels.

SW: What did they do with the dead squirrels? Did they incinerate them?

HC: No, they just buried them. But they had to go after them. The damage the squirrels were doing to almond orchards, to the grazing land, was obvious. They totally destroyed the grazing land.

SW: With their holes?

HC: Not only with the holes, but the squirrels would eat the grass. There was no grass left for the cattle.

SW: What did the squirrels do to the almonds?

HC: They'd eat the almonds right off the trees.

Charles was very innovative. He developed several programs while he was Agricultural Commissioner. One of them was the roadside weed control program that has been written up in national magazines. The state of California developed a roadside weed control program based on all of his work.

Then you go back into the early forties when Charles developed a set of regulations for the use of pesticides. If I'm not mistaken, Yolo County was the first county to develop a complete set of those regulations. Later in the early fifties when the state took over pesticide enforcement on a statewide basis, it was Yolo County's regulations that were the foundation for their regulations. All of this can be attributed to Charles. Charles was very, very sensitive to the use of pesticides. He always felt that a man's home was his castle. You could use pesticides on your property, but you had no right to get that pesticide on someone else's property.

Again, it was Charles' foresight that helped to develop the heart machine. I'm talking about the heart machine that is probably used every day of the week throughout the United States. When the heart machine was first developed, I'm going back now to the late fifties, we had some of the finest heart specialists in the country come to Yolo County to get the blood that they used in experimenting with their first heart machine.

SW: What was Charles' role in this?

HC: His role was that he took sole responsibility for the use of the animal blood for experimental use. The Animal Control Division was under his administration.

SW: Did he make blood available to the doctors?

HC: He made dog blood available to the doctors. We would destroy the dogs in the Pound. The minute we would destroy them, the surgeons would extract their blood. This was done in a humane manner. The blood was taken from the dogs after death, immediately after death, so the dogs never suffered. Charles always worried about this. He did not want the animals to suffer, and they didn't.

Some people, you know, do not like animals to be used for experimental research. This is certainly understandable. But here is a man that had foresight and the understanding that this research was very valuable. The doctors needed large quantities of blood, and Charles knew that without animals of this type, they were not going to be able to get all the blood they needed.

It was in 1958 or '59, if I remember correctly, when we got a call from one of the very large hospitals. They had a sixteen-year-old girl they had just operated on. She had been in an accident. They knew she was going to die. They didn't feel the machine was ready to be used on a human, but they went ahead, hooked her up to the machine, operated on her heart, and they saved her life. That was the first time the machine had been used in this area here.

You know, we can sit and talk, but when I think of people who have gone through open heart surgery, I just can't help but think of Charles Hardy.

SW: Would you tell me a little bit about working with Charles Hardy. Do you think he ran a well-administered office when he was Agricultural Commissioner?

HC: Charles ran an excellent office. I believe the crucial point would be his employees' longevity. The secretaries' longevity probably averaged six to eight years. And the field staff probably averaged in excess of twelve to fourteen years. If you compare this to other businesses, it would be a feather in Charles' cap.

Charles was very good to his employees. He was very understanding, but again, he wanted a full eight hours plus. Charles had a funny way of working with people. I shouldn't say it's funny. He had a way of finding out what the employees were like — their problems, concerns, dedication to work. You know, most people like to go home early on a weekend. Charles every once in a while would come in to someone at quarter to five on a Friday evening and say, "We got a problem down in Clarksburg and we've got to go down there right away." He would do this just to get the reaction of the individual. Sometimes he would go. But most generally he would say, "Well, just a minute. I've got to make a telephone call." Then he'd come back out and he'd say, "Well, gee. I was able to take care of it by phone." But he wanted to know just how the individual would react. He would do the same thing to the secretaries. But I don't ever remember Charles ever being told by an employee, "Well, I don't have time." Because they always had time. They knew that if Charles wanted something, he got it. Tremendous individual!

SW: Was your relationship with Charles a professional one while you were working for him?

HC: The relationship was, from 1946 until 1963 when he retired, strictly a professional one. Charles always demanded this of his employees. Except, after six o'clock in the evening, he was a friend. Since 1963 Charles and I have remained close personal friends. We see each other quite often. He comes in and visits, and we talk to each other.

Charles Hardy reminds me of my father. Charles Hardy, if he couldn't say something nice about somebody, he would say nothing. Charles Hardy is in a class all by himself. He is every inch a gentleman and a scholar.

VII. AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

Agriculture has always come first for the men and women of the Yolanda Ranch. In the beginning they concentrated on the growing, processing and marketing of fruits and vegetables on the ranch. Then both George Hecke and Charles Hardy had distinguished careers in government, where they worked to regulate producers and sellers of agricultural products and to protect consumers of those products.

In this chapter, Leila and Charles Hardy talk about another activity which they and George Hecke enthusiastically participated in for many years, agricultural fairs. Whether they were creating exhibits or judging produce and exhibits, their goals were always to educate the public about agriculture and to promote agricultural products of the highest quality.

The family has been part of fairs in many parts of the state and nation over a period of three-quarters of a century. George Hecke worked on Yolo County's exhibit at the International Exposition in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1904. At the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915, he was a member of the International Horticultural Jury of Awards and Chairman of the Yolo County Committee. In 1939 he was a Director of the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island in San Francisco.

Leila and Charles Hardy began judging at county fairs in California in the early 1930s and continued to do so for forty years. For many years they designed and helped put together Yolo County's exhibit at the California State Fair, and many of their exhibits were awarded blue ribbons.

Not surprisingly, the Yolo County Fair has occupied a special place in the hearts of the family. George Hecke worked to establish it in the county, and both he and Charles Hardy served on the board of the 40th District Agricultural Fair Association which manages the fair. They have watched the Yolo County Fair develop into one of the most successful small county fairs in California.

Charles Hardy wrote about the value of State Fair exhibits in an article in the Pacific Rural Press, August 27, 1938:

> When we exhibitors think of the California State Fair, we have two reactions: The first thought is the tremendous amount of work and planning necessary to put on a creditable display. The second idea is the joy which comes from a worthwhile exhibit and the sociability with our fellow competitors. Most of the county exhibits are put on by the

Charles and Leila Hardy helped create Yolo County's exhibit at the 1938 California State Fair. The exhibit, which displayed all of Yolo's diversified agricultural products, won many awards, including the Grand Sweepstakes prize for its Chinese rice bowl display.

Agricultural Commissioner. Probably here, even more than at our conventions, do we have an opportunity to fraternize and discuss our big and little problems. It is a pleasure to see agricultural producers of our county come to look at their county display and beam with pride when they see how favorably it and, perhaps, their own entry compares in competition. . . .

The exhibit as a whole gives the agricultural picture of the county and the quality of the products are an indication, to a big degree, of their suitability in that locality. . . .

The most surprising comments come from out of state visitors who are truly amazed at some of our displays. It is to them that our exhibit is an eye-opener, for in no other state can such a variety of products be produced. Size and quality stand out above everything else.

George Hecke's Contributions to Fairs

SW: Leila, would you tell me what you remember about your father's interest in agricultural fairs?

LHH: Dad was quite an expert on fruits, naturally, being around them all the time. He was asked to put on the Yolo County exhibit in 1904 at the St. Louis Exposition. He and Mother went back to St. Louis for the whole eight or nine months the Fair lasted. Dad was also asked to judge the fruit at that fair.

He was also asked to put on the Yolo County exhibit at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915. He went to San Francisco for that. He didn't man the booth himself, but he had some people there to stay with it all the time. He and Mr. Arnold Stubenrauch of the University of California at Berkeley were the two horticultural judges at that fair.

I remember that Dad always wanted his children to know the things that were going on. He always brought a sample of the fruit that wasn't too perishable home from the fair to show us. I remember learning five or six varieties of apples that were just coming onto the market at that time. It certainly helped me later when I took a final examination in Horticulture under Dr. Hermes at Berkeley. One of the parts of our examination was to identify 100 varieties of apples. I can remember some of them to this day.

Then, in 1938 and '39 when the World's Fair (Golden Gate International Exposition) at Treasure Island was on, Dad was asked to manage the entire Agricultural Building. Because of his connection with all his friends in agriculture, it was an easy thing for him to get support for exhibitors or whatever else was necessary to carry on the building. It was a big, big, big building, and he had it almost full. I think there were one or two spaces open, and Dad was worried because he wanted every bit of it filled. There were people there from all over the state. The olive growers, for example, had an exhibit. The peach people had an exhibit. The animal industry had one, and the milk industry and so on. All of them had their booths there. The building was a great credit to him, I think, and to the state.

SW: Was the building self-supporting?

George Hecke and John McLaren, retired Superintendent of San Francisco's Park Department, are shown breaking ground for the Agriculture Building which was a part of the 1939-1940 Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay.

LHH: Yes. Dad got donations and he got the people to rent the spaces. It was a very nice exhibit.

Leila and Charles Hardy Judge at Fairs

SW: Would you tell me about your own experiences with agricultural fairs?

LHH: About ten years after we were married, while the children were still in school, Charles and I had the opportunity to start judging at district fairs. The first time we were asked to judge was in Auburn. The Horticultural Commissioner there asked us to judge their agricultural products. In those days, it only took an hour or two to do the judging. The fair was very small.

At the very beginning, things were very crude. There was no organization. If they had heads of lettuce, some specimens would be over here and some would be over there. Some specimens would be mixed with the beans, some would be mixed with the sweet potatoes, and some would be mixed someplace else. It was very different, but it was interesting. Then they started getting organized and well systemized, and they are very well managed now.

After that first fair in Auburn, we began judging district fairs up and down the state of California, from the Los Angeles County Fair up to Crescent City. We went over east to Bishop and to some of those smaller towns on the east side of California.

It was a challenge. Most of the time Charles I and judged the fruits together, or I judged the vegetables and he judged the fruits. When there wasn't enough produce, I often judged the processed foods, and very often I judged clothing in those early days. As the fairs got larger, Charles and I most always judged things together. We really loved it. We liked going up to little places like Hayford, outside Redding, and Booneville in Mendocino County. Those two areas were so isolated that they didn't participate in the State Fair. So their own fairs were very important in their community. Everybody took part.

SW: Who put on these fairs?

LHH: Early, the County Farm Bureau would do it before the district fairs were organized. Then, when the district fairs were established, they qualified for State money and they grew larger. They had buildings and many more things than they ever had before.

SW: Where did the district fairs get their money? Was it from the state horse-racing revenues?

LHH: Yes, from pari-mutual.

SW: What were these fairs supposed to do?

LHH: They were to educate the farmers as well as the people about what to expect from produce. Before, in the first fairs, you'd be surprised at what people would bring in. They wouldn't bring in the best they had; they'd bring in monstrosities, the great big specimens. Now products are judged according to their market and commercial value. The state laws regulate the size and the weight of certain

things. The judges consider uniformity of size, being true to form, condition of the fruit, and maturity. So, if the entry called for three onions or three pears, you would have three pears as near perfect as you could find them, and as much alike as possible. The exhibitors soon began to see that the monstrosities weren't acceptable at the fair. You wanted to show the best of a particular product.

SW: Was the idea to help the farmers have standardized produce?

LHH: It was to show people what would grow in their community and what they could grow. And the people were very, very interested. It got so that in these smaller communities it was much harder to judge than in the larger ones, because everybody would bring in pruducts. They got prizes for their winners: three dollars for first prize, two dollars for second, and one dollar for third. Some people would come away with twenty dollars, thirty dollars or fifty dollars from their fairs, and that was a lot of money in those days.

SW: When was that?

LHH: In the latter thirties. The Depression was pretty much over, and the people were traveling a lot more. Things were much easier.

SW: How did you travel to the fairs?

LHH: We went in our automobile. We were each given a salary for judging. I think at first we got fifteen dollars a day. Then later on, we got twenty-five dollars a day. They never did pay very much, but people didn't do it for the money. We did it because we liked it.

When the Auburn Fair was in a bad situation for a few years, they wrote us a letter saying, "You have judged for us for some twenty years. If we can't afford to pay our judges, would you consider judging without any pay?" And of course we did. It was fun. We got so we knew the people who judged and those who exhibited and we were all friends.

Besides the fruits and vegetables, we also judged the exhibits. There would be exhibits representing different products put on by a county, or the Farm Bureau, or a family. Those were always a challenge for us.

Charles judged fruits at the Los Angeles County Fair, which was almost as large as the State Fair. I never did, but we both judged at the State Fair.

SW: Are you still judging?

LHH: No. After I broke my hip in 1978, I couldn't stand and walk around that much. Now I've retired.

Charles judged up until last year. He was a judge in the San Joaquin County Fair in 1978. That was his last year.

California State Fair

SW: Let's talk about the California State Fair now. Charles, you were appointed Agricultural Commissioner in 1936. Weren't you responsible for the Yolo County Exhibit at the State Fair that year?

CHH: Yes. That was the first one for which I was personally responsible. The previous Commissioner, Mr. Berry, had put it on before. I took on some of the activities that he had assumed when he took over the job years before.

SW: By the next year, weren't you the president of the California State Fair Exhibitors?

CHH: Yes. The exhibitors there in the Agricultural building elected me as their representative. I had to go before the State Fair Agricultural Board and tell them what we Commissioners wanted. We wanted refrigeration for our replacement fruit during the Fair. Our fruit would break down so rapidly in the heat that we wanted some way to maintain it throughout the Fair so it would be very presentable. The Fair was supposed to be a showcase of what each county grew, and we had specimens there to show the public what could be grown.

I remember one of the first exhibits that we put on was "What grew anywhere, grew everywhere in Yolo County."

SW: I'll bet that won a prize, didn't it?

CHH: Yes. We were pretty good.

SW: In fact, your exhibits won a lot of prizes, didn't they?

CHH: Yes, they won prizes right along. Of course, each different commodity was judged against the other booths in the State Fair by the judging committee. They checked on the fruit to see if there were defects, that it was packaged in standard containers, and it was competitive with the others. They looked to see which one had the best specimens, the most commercial type of fruit, the most acceptable in the market.

SW: Leila, I know you helped with the exhibits at the State Fair. Will you tell me about them?

LHH: Each county puts on their own exhibit. The Supervisors allot the amount of money that they are willing to put out for the Fair. Yolo County was one of the counties with a smaller allotment, like Calaveras and Mono Counties. We had an $800 budget. San Joaquin and Solano would have maybe three times as much money as we would have. You had to use what help you had, so the Supervisors allowed Charles to use his men to pick up the products when they were on the job. They kept searching for good specimens. They'd gather grain from one farmer. From another farmer some beans. Other places they'd gather fruit and put it in cold storage.

About three weeks before the Fair started in Sacramento, the men from the office and their wives would come out every evening to our home. We'd take the grain, sort it kernel by kernel, and put it in jars. We'd throw out the irregular ones and get the grain as even as we could. We'd have four or five kinds of grain, four or five varieties of beans, corn and all the dried products. Those would be all sorted and ready to put out in containers at the Yolo County Exhibit at the State Fair.

We would have a theme for the exhibit, like "The Market Basket." One year we had olives, and another year we featured rice. When the exhibits were built, you made your plans according to what yourtheme was.

In September, 1980, California State Fair General Manager Kirk Breed awarded a 1980 State Fair medallion to Charles and Leila Hardy for their more than 50 years of participation in the State Fair.

I remember the time that we had olives. The olive association once had a monk in an exhibit with an olive branch in his hand which he waved back and forth like this. (Gesturing) We arranged to have that padre up there on top of our exhibit. He wore a long habit, and he was waving the olive branch back and forth.

Did I tell you about the apples and the worms?

SW: No.

LHH: Well, back of our exhibit at the State Fair one year was the Napa County exhibit. They had many varieties of apples. So did Sonoma County. They were all entered against each other for the first prize. I remember that Mr. Bremmer from Sonoma County came up to the padre. He bowed very low to our monk, and he said, "Dear God, please put worms in Bill Butler's apples." Bill Butler was the Commissioner from Napa County. Well, everybody laughed about it. It was just one of those things that we all do.

Well, the funny thing was that the judges did cut one of Bill Butler's apples and they found a worm in it. That made him take second place instead of first. The story about the priest that put worms in Bill Butler's apples was written up in the Pacific Rural Press.

Those were some of the funny things that we did. It was real fun. The people worked with us very nicely, and we took many, many prizes.

Charles gave up putting on the exhibits during the war when the State Fair was closed. By the time the Fairs came back after the war, the department (Yolo Co. Agricultural Commission) had grown so much that Charles' men had too much to do, so they didn't have time to help with the exhibits any more. They had added Weights and Measures in his office, and Animal Control. So, another man took it over.

About that time, I was asked to judge the county booths, not the products at the State Fair. That was a challenge. I really loved that.

The exhibits were divided in groups. Some, like Calaveras County, entered minerals; some entered fruits; some, like Sonoma County, had flowers. Some, like San Francisco County, entered a miscellaneous section.

I judged for the best in agriculture. Who had the best prunes, or apricots, plums, peaches, almonds, walnuts. And who had the best labels. The fruits were the hardest ones. They had so many of them.

Yolo County Fair

SW: One last fair, I'd like to talk about is the Yolo County Fair. Leila, didn't your father help to establish the first fair in Yolo County?

LHH: Yes, he did, long ago.

SW: Was that while he was working for the State Department?

LHH: No, I think it was before that.

SW: Did the money for the fair come from the county?

LHH: Yes, all the money came from the county in those days. Later they rented space for all the farm machinery and for exhibits. That helped.

SW: Whose property did they buy for the county fairgrounds?

LHH: It was a ranch that belonged to R.B. Blowers. It was he who invented the oil bleached raisins. They are absolutely delicious, better than any raisin, I think, that you can find on the market today.

The Blowers' old house was there on the fairgrounds for a long, long time. Unfortunately they saw fit to take it down. They wouldn't have done that if they were thinking about it now.

I used to exhibit things in the old house for fun in the early days of the fair. They used the rooms for exhibits. One room was used for the fruits; another was for the fresh vegetables; another for dried products; another was for clothing; and another was for canned goods. It was interesting to be in the building.

SW: Charles, I understand that you also helped to establish the Yolo County Fair. Weren't you Director of the Fortieth District Agricultural Fair Association in 1938?

CHH: Yes, that was our local Yolo County Fair Association. I was secretary first, and then I was director later.

The fair was started by St. Luke's Guild. One of the church members, Betty Robinson, was one of the women who started the fair. It was primarily a horse show in the beginning, mostly livestock at first. The following year we had the horticulture and agriculture exhibits.

SW: When was that?

CHH: That was about 1938, about that time.

SW: Where was the fair held?

CHH: We didn't have it where it is now. We had it out on Kentucky Avenue right where the Kentucky grocery store is today. We just leased the land there.

Then we went before the Board of Supervisors. Later the Governor appointed a Fair Committee. I think there were five of us on that committee. We went before the Board of Supervisors and told them that the State would appropriate so much money if they would go along with the idea of having a district fair here in Yolo County. And they did.

I don't know exactly how the money was apportioned, but the county had to go with the State some small amount in order to buy the Blowers' ranch. That was really the beginning of the success of the fair.

William Goold Remembers Dr. Hecke

Editor's note: Due to a malfunctioning tape recorder, this interview is based on my notes of a 90-minute conversation with Mr. Goold in his office at Cal Expo on September 4, 1980.

SW: Mr. Goold, how did you first become acquainted with George Hecke?

WOG: I met Dr. Hecke in 1939 when he was Director of the Hall of Agriculture at the Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco. I had just graduted from a three-year course in Ornamental Horticulture at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo and was looking for a job. My sister Dagmar Goold was Dr. Hecke's secretary at the World's Fair, and she helped me get a job as a Student Assistant at the Fair. I was assistant to the Exhibit Technician, also serving as custodian, (what they called janitor then). I had a contract with the exhibitors to keep the exhibits in the Hall of Agriculture clean and do anything else that needed doing. I was a general flunky.

I didn't see much of Dr. Hecke during the day when I was working in the Hall, but I really got to know him when I drove him for a month every day back and forth from his ranch to the Fair. I was a substitute for his other driver, Glenn Freeborn.

During that month I lived upstairs in the big house on the Yolanda and I was privileged to have breakfast every morning with Dr. Hecke and his family, including Leila and Charles Hardy and their children. They were all there every day.

We ate in the kitchen and had wonderful food, all things from the ranch. I remember the pork sausage, bacon and eggs. The ranch was very varied. They grew their own vegetables, fruit and meat, beef, pigs and even sheep, I think. Then too there were pheasants and doves which they shot out on the back forty.

I remember that every morning Dr. Hecke would get up early. He always took a swim in his swimming pool first thing, and then he'd talk to his foreman Orville Wright. He'd line out the work for the day. Then he'd come in for breakfast with the whole family. After breakfast he'd have a few more words with the foreman and give him some last-minute directions and then we'd leave.

We'd always stop for a paper in Dixon. It took about an hour and a half to get to Treasure Island and Dr. Hecke would read the paper while I drove. He had a car with State plates and he always wanted to go sixty-five miles per hour, even though the speed limit was fifty-five then. If I'd slow down at all, he'd say, "Can't you pass that car?" He was always in a hurry to get to work. In the evening it was the same; he was always in a hurry to get back to the ranch, to his family and his work there.

You know, I was fresh out of school and this was my first big job. It was quite an experience getting to know Dr. Hecke. I remember one Sunday while I was living at the ranch, we went to Woodland to look at a new car. He had specially arranged for the salesman to be in the auto showroom, for they were normally closed on Sunday. We looked at a 1940 Lincoln Zephyr V-12. Dr. Hecke asked me, "Bill, do you like this car?" I said, "Yes." He turned to the guy and said, "I'll take it." The salesman asked him "Do you want terms?" Dr. Hecke said, "No, I'll pay cash." And he did. That is the kind of man he was.

It was interesting about that car. When Dr. Hecke had the State car, he never drove it himself. I did. But when he bought this new car, he always drove it himself and I never got the chance to drive that car.

You know, I only drove for him a short time, just one month, but I got to know him pretty well and he made a great impression on me. For instance, each week he paid his men, the ones who worked on the ranch, on Friday. On Saturday he'd go to Second Street in Sacramento, to the Wide Awake Employment office, to hire men to come to work for him on Monday. He knew that the guys he paid off would get drunk on Saturday night and would be no good for work on Monday morning. He wanted fresh men to work for him.

Then the following Saturday he would do the same thing, often hiring the men who had worked for him the week before.

SW: Do you know how Dr. Hecke came to be the Director of the Hall of Agriculture at the Fair?

WOG: The Agriculture Committee of the California Commission was responsible for the Hall of Agriculture at the Fair. The Chairman of that committee, Vince Garrod from Saratoga, chose Hecke to be the Director. He knew Hecke when he was Director of the State Department of Agriculture and knew that he was the one person in the state who could actually organize the Hall. Hecke knew everybody in agriculture. He could say to someone, "Joe, I want you in there," or he could talk to the boards of the growers associations. He did talk to the Sunkist orange people, the honey, olive and prune growers, all the coops, and he got them all to join in.

He was a wonderful little guy, a real dynamo, forceful, but fair and very human. He was an autocrat in the way he organized and ran the Hall. He got people's cooperation because he was a real leader. He tried to do his best and people knew what he was trying to do. He got the job done. It was an excellent lesson to me to know this type of person. I enjoyed and respected him very much.

SW: Would you tell some of your recollections of Dr. Hecke at the World's Fair?

WOG: Besides lining up the exhibitors for the Hall, Dr. Hecke arranged special events to highlight agricultural industries, like Prune Day, Grape Day and the like. He also entertained celebrities, people who were famous in the world of agriculture. Governor Stark of Missouri was one of those. He was head of Stark Nurseries which was a very large mail-order business in those days. Dr. Hecke arranged a special day for him. As part of that day, Governor Stark was included in the regular luncheon club they had in the office at Treasure Island.

That club was the one place I saw Dr. Hecke relax. He used to go there for lunch every day. There was a little kitchen there and the office staff cooked lunch. They had wonderful meals, for they had access to the fruits and vegetables from the exhibits. Also the wines, even champagne sometimes.

I remember that at the end of 1939 when Dr. Hecke resigned as Director of the Hall and they broke up the Fair until the next year, the staff gave him two copper vases. One had an inscription expressing appreciation for Dr. Hecke's organization of the Hall of Agriculture. The other one was from the luncheon club.

After Dr. Hecke resigned, Fred Clark took over as Director. He was the Agricultural Commissioner from Placer County who had taken a leave of absence from his job to be the Assistant Director of the Hall. He had been responsible for organizing the special events and exhibits. Hecke had another assistant, Gene Smith, who was the public relations person.

SW: What did you do after the World's Fair was over?

WOG: I went back to college for a little while. Then I had five years in the service, and came back to college and graduated in 1947. I got a job in the Division of Fairs and Expositions of the Department of Agriculture. That was the division that administered seventy-two district and county fairs throughout the state. I worked with the premium awards. I held that job for seventeen years. In 1965 I moved to the Department of Parks and Recreation as Chief of the Bureau of Exhibits for the State Fair, and I've been here ever since.

SW: When did you become acquainted with Leila and Charles Hardy?

WOG: I met them in 1939 when I drove Dr. Hecke to the World's Fair and lived at Yolanda. I used to see them every morning at breakfast.

Later when I worked with the district and county fairs, I used to see them occasionally when they judged the exhibits. I didn't have much contact with them though until 1965 when I came to the State Fair. Leila and Charles have been in just about every State Fair for the past fifty years. In fact, last Friday (August 29, 1980) they came to the State Fair on Yolo County Day and were presented with a medal for their more than fifty years of participation in the State Fair as exhibitors. Herb Chandler, the Yolo County Agricultural Commissioner, brought them to the Fair. They were totally surprised by the tribute to them!

The Hardys gathered fruits and vegetables for the Yolo County exhibits at the State Fair until 1979 when they decided they couldn't do it any more. They did a tremendous job. They would go around and collect all these things. That took friendship, knowing who had the beautiful produce. And they'd bring the things to the Fairgrounds. That was a big job. They are the type of people you can depend on. They certainly put in their time on the Fair. They are just wonderful people. That's all there is to it.

SW: Thank you Mr. Goold. You've added some very interesting details to our story.

Editor's Note

No oral history would be complete without a "last word." As interviewer-editor of this story, I have spent many pleasant hours visiting the Yolanda Ranch, leafing through old family scrapbooks, and talking with members of the Hardy family and their friends. I have come home from each interview laden with good things -- squash and tomatoes from the garden, a bottle of special wine, the glow that comes from sharing stories and laughter with interesting, kindly people.

Thank you all. It has been a rare experience for me to get to know you.

Shipley Walters

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